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THE FIGHTING YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA



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THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE FREEDOM CHARTER CAN PUT AN END TO BLOODSHED

June 26, 1985, marked the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter at the historic Congress of the People at Kliptown, Transvaal, on South African Freedom Day, 1955. Beneath the great, green four-spoked Freedom Wheel, the symbol of the Congress of the People campaign, the 2,844 elected delegates who had come from every corner of the country pledged to strive, sparing neither strength nor courage, to win the democratic changes set out in the Charter. Then they went home, probably scarcely realising the full significance of what they had done. They had held congresses before — many of them — adopted declarations, issued appeals, voiced their grievances, made demands for an end to the oppressive

apartheid system. In 1952 nearly 10,000 of them had gone to jail in the great Defiance Campaign against unjust laws, enduring every form of punishment and humiliation in their determination to be free; some had even given their lives. Could the speaking and writing of a few words achieve more than that, raise the struggle to a higher level?

Perhaps only this year, when a multitude of organisations and individuals throughout the country joined in ceremonies to commemorate the adoption of the Charter, can the full significance of the Charter and the Congress that gave birth to it be properly evaluated. Overcoming all the attempts of the apartheid regime to destroy it, as well as a mass of pettifogging objections from the ultra-left and the ultra-right within the ranks of the anti-apartheid movement itself, the Freedom Charter is now clearly seen by friend and foe alike as the picture of the alternative South Africa which must replace the racist state now tottering towards its demise. It is stamped with the authority not only of the expressive language in which it is couched but also the history of the struggle to produce it and transform it into reality. The Freedom Charter is today an institution which can never be demolished or erased from South African minds. It is an idea whose time has come.

How It Started

The idea of the Congress of the People was first mooted by ANC leader Professor Z. K. Matthews in an address to the Cape provincial congress of the ANC in August 1953. The conference adopted the proposal, which was endorsed by the ANC's national conference in December of the same year. The South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation and the Congress of Democrats joined in support of the idea and a Joint Action Council of the four organisations was set up to conduct the campaign. A corps of Freedom Volunteers was created to be the core of the campaign, making themselves available to the organisers for whatever work in whatever place they were required.

The text and terms of the Freedom Charter are now well known in South Africa and abroad. Less well known is the "Call to the Congress of the People" issued by the National Action Council, in itself a most poetic document which struck a chord in the hearts of all who heard it.

"We call the people of South Africa black and white — let us speak together of freedom!

"We call the farmers of the reserves and trust lands. Let us speak of the wide land, and the narrow strips on which we toil. Let us speak of brothers without

land, and of children without schooling. Let us speak of taxes and of cattle, and of famine. LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

"We call the miners of coal, gold and diamonds. Let us speak of dark shifts, and the cold compounds far from our families. Let us speak of heavy labour and long hours, and of men sent home to die. Let us speak of rich masters, and poor wages. LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

"We call the workers of farms and forests. Let us speak of the rich foods we grow, and the laws that keep us poor. Let us speak of harsh treatment and of children and women forced to work. Let us speak of private prisons, and beatings and of passes.

"We call the workers of factories and shops. Let us speak of the good things we make, and the bad conditions of our work. Let us speak of the many passes and the few jobs. Let us speak of foremen and of transport and trade unions; of holidays and of houses. LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

"We call the teachers, students and the preachers. Let us speak of the light that comes with learning, and the ways we are kept in darkness. Let us speak of the great services we can render, and of the narrow ways that are open to us. Let us speak of laws, and governments, and rights. LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

"We call the housewives and mothers. Let us speak of the fine children that we bear, and of their stunted lives. Let us speak of the many illnesses and deaths, and of the few clinics and schools. Let us speak of high prices and of shanty towns. LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

"Let us speak together. All of us together — African and European, Indian and Coloured. Voter and voteless. Privileged and rightless. The happy and the homeless. All the people of South Africa; of the towns and the countryside.

"Let us speak together of freedom. And of the happiness that can come to men and women if they live in a land that is free. Let us speak of freedom. And of how to get it for ourselves, and for our children".

And the call continued, giving details of how the Congress of the People was to be organised, how the people should send in their demands for incorporation in the Freedom Charter, how they should hold discussions and elect delegates. ANC President-General Chief A. J. Lutuli wrote later:

"Nothing in the history of the liberatory movement in South Africa quite caught the popular imagination as this did, not even the Defiance Campaign." (*Let My People Go, An Autobiography*, p. 159.)

The campaigning went on for over a year. In a special report to the 1954 conference of the ANC, the National Executive Committee said:

"Never before have the mass of South African citizens been summoned together to proclaim their desire and aspirations in a single declaration . . . Never in South African history have the ordinary people of this country been enabled to take part in deciding their own fate and future. Elections have been restricted to a small minority of the population; franchise rights, particularly in recent times, have been threatened and curtailed. There is a need to hear the voice of the ordinary citizen of this land, proclaiming to the world his demand for freedom.

"The Congress of the People will not be just another meeting or another conference. It will be a mass assembly of delegates elected by the people of all races in every town, village, farm, factory, mine and kraal . . . This Freedom Charter will be the South African peoples' declaration of human rights, which every civilised South African will work to uphold and carry into practice."

In other words, the Congress of the People was to be, not the end, but the beginning of a campaign for national liberation and freedom. As Moses Kotane, general secretary of the South African Communist Party, wrote in his essay "South Africa's Way Forward" published in the newspaper *Advance* (successor to the banned *Guardian*) in May 1954:

"The decision by the leaders of the main democratic organisations to embark upon a great Congress of the People of South Africa opens the way for a great advance towards a democratic future . . . Such a future can only be won by mass action of the common people of South Africa, and in the first place by the oppressed masses, who are the main victims and chief opponents of the system of colour bars and dictatorship".

The Demands Roll In

By the time the Congress took place, COP headquarters had been flooded for months with the demands of the people adopted at meetings large and small up and down the country, written "on sheets torn from school exercise books, on little dog-eared scraps of paper, on slips torn from C.O.P. leaflets". (*New Age,* June 23, 1955.)

The plans for the Congress of the People had roused extraordinary interest amongst the people of South Africa. It opened the eyes of the blind, gave hope to the hopeless. A typical message from farm labourers in Nelspruit who described themselves as "three hundred brothers in slavery" said:

"We have no voice. We have no more land. We have no more cattle. Our children are starving. We demand the right to live, not die. Our children want education, not 'Verwoerd education'. We love the soil of Afrika! We are

poor, brothers, but will pay for the train ticket of our delegate". (*New Age*, June 23, 1955). And *New Age* reported the following week:

"Delegates came from every centre in the Union of any size, from the reserves and locations, the farms and cities. They came by train, car, cart, lorry and bus, some even on foot, converging on Kliptown from all directions, to speak, as the simple, home-made banners announced, 'of freedom'. For one and a half days Kliptown, a quiet little settlement in the Klip Valley, became South Africa in miniature. Old and young, grizzled patriarchs, and bright young children, clerks and scholars, doctors and ministers — every shade and facet of South African life was represented.

"Delegates entered the enclosed strip of veld where the Congress was held, marching and singing, under their banners and African National Congress flags. One delegation was led by a brass band. Many of the women wore beautiful dresses and shawls, elaborately embroidered in Congress colours. Twenty young Basupatsela, the newly formed Orlando pioneer troupe, dressed in green shirts, yellow scarves and black trousers, were the envy of delegates who sported only a rosette in those colours, some with the Congress flag flying from their breast-pockets, others the tie, yet others the Congress scarf.

"The conference site fluttered with banners of all shapes, sizes and materials. Some said: 'Down with Bantu Education'; others condemned the pass laws. Phrases from the Freedom Charter were prominent: 'The People Shall Govern', 'All Shall Be Equal before the Law'.

"'Shame', shouted the crowd when George Peake, of the Cape Western delegation, announced that his delegation's banners had been seized in the police station at Beaufort West where 50 delegates had been held up and not allowed to proceed to the conference. Leaders from all the provinces spoke from the platform to introduce the ten sections of the Charter. Then, one by one, first slowly but later in a deluge, the names poured on to the platform of delegates who wanted to speak. Everybody wanted to speak, and only a sprinkling could, but they spoke for all the others from their hearts, about the longings and hopes of the people, their hatred for apartheid and their will for freedom. Cries of 'Mayibuye' and clapping punctuated every speech".

Towards the end of the Congress the report of the Credentials Committee was presented by Robert Resha, who announced that 2,884 delegates were present, each one representing an electorate ranging from 10 to thousands of people.

"We shall give you some idea of the places from which the delegates have come. There are delegates representing the reserves. There are delegates

from Natal, from Sekhukhuniland, Zululand, Transkei, Ciskei, delegates from the farms and the trust lands, from the mines and factories. Almost every place in the Transvaal is represented here. From Cape Town, from Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth and every town in the Union. Even Meadowlands is represented here. Every Native section of the population is represented here. We have 2,186 African delegates, 320 Indian delegates, 230 Coloured delegates, 112 European delegates, 721 women. Some were voiceless by the action of the police. They were prevented from coming to the conference. Their demands are here before us. Even though they are not here, their voices will be heard. The Charter will have a greater support than any other document that has ever been drawn up".

The Regime Strikes Back

From the outset, the apartheid regime had realised the danger to their minority rule represented by the COP and the proposed Freedom Charter. The whole weight of authority had been thrown into the struggle to prevent the Congress ever taking place. Those who first issued the historic Call were banned, and those who succeeded them were banned by the Minister of Justice or exiled by the Minister of Native Affairs in a futile attempt to strangle the Congress at birth. But new leaders came forward to take over the work, and in the end it was Justice Minister Swart and his secret police who were compelled to abandon the banning weapon because they realised they could not cut off the heads of all the millions of their enemies.

But still they made every effort to smash the Congress. All roads to Johannesburg were heavily guarded and patrolled, and every vehicle was stopped which the police thought might conceivably be carrying delegates. Every delegate who could be arrested on the flimsiest pretext was duly arrested. Some hundreds of delegates were stopped in this way, but nearly 3,000 got through. As a last resort the police tried to disrupt the Congress itself, invading the arena on the second day, seizing all documents, and searching and taking the name and address of every delegate. But the Congress responded by singing the anthem of the African National Congress and carried on with its agenda, triumphantly adopting the Freedom Charter in spite of every provocation and intimidation. If anything, the clumsy police tactics raised the spirit of the delegates to its highest point and they pledged:

"These freedoms we will fight for, side by side, throughout our lives, until we have won our liberty".

The Charter was officially adopted by the ANC at a special conference held in Orlando over the week-end of March 31-April 1, 1956 and in due

course became the official programme of the Congress Alliance, which now included the South African Congress of Trade Unions formed in 1955. Calling for a campaign to collect 1 million signatures to the Charter, the ANC national executive committee in a report to the 1955 ANC conference said:

"It is not enough to have adopted the Freedom Charter. It must not become a document framed and hanging on the wall. *The Charter can* and *must be the inspiration of the people in their freedom fight: it must be their organiser.*"

This was the aspect of the COP campaign and the Freedom Charter which had most roused apprehension in the ranks of the ruling Nationalist Party. The Charter was a distillation of the day-to-day experience and the demands of the masses of the oppressed peoples of South Africa. It was simple, and it was comprehensive. It pinpointed with deadly accuracy what was wrong with apartheid South Africa and outlined what changes were needed to put things right. It contained no ideology, no plan of action, no reference to international affairs save for the last section of the Charter which called in the most general terms for independence, peace and friendship among all peoples. Yet precisely because of its simplicity and truthfulness to reality it was profoundly revolutionary. It was timeless and could not be dated. It is as meaningful today as the day on which it was first adopted.

The guardians of white domination realised that the Freedom Charter confronted them with the greatest challenge they had faced since Union. It was the moral opposite of apartheid. The warrants with which the police conducted their raids and searches before and after COP referred to investigations into charges of treason. And in the early morning of December 5, 1956 — by accident or design the birthday of Minister of Justice Swart — 156 people's leaders were dragged from their beds and, after 10 days in jail, brought to court on a charge of treason.

The State case was as simple as the Charter itself. The essence of the crime of high treason, said Oswald Pirow, a former Minister of Justice and war-time leader of the Nazi organisation New Order called from retirement to lead the prosecution, was "hostile intent." The accused knew, he said, that the achievement of the demands of the Freedom Charter in their lifetime would necessarily involve the overthrow of the State by violence. For good measure Pirow threw in the charge that the national liberation movement in South Africa was part of an international Communist-inspired conspiracy "to overthrow by violence all governments in non-communist countries where sections of the population did not have equal political and economic rights".

The case dragged on for years before it was finally thrown out in 1961, the judges of the special court declaring inter alia:

1. "It has not been proved that the form of State pictured in the Freedom Charter is a Communst state".

2. "It has not been proved that the African National Congress had become a Communist organisation".

3. "The Prosecution has failed to prove that the accused had pesonal knowledge of the Communist doctrine of violent revolution, or that the accused propagated this doctrine as such."

4. "The means to be employed for the achievement of the New State were those decided upon by the African National Congress in its duly adopted and official 1949 Programme of Action".

5. "Whilst the Prosecution has succeeded in showing that the Programme of Action contemplated the use of illegal methods, and that its application in fact resulted in illegal action during the Defiance Campaign, and that the African National Congress, as a matter of policy, decided to employ such means for the achievement of a fundamentally different State from the present, it has failed to show that the African National Congress as a matter of policy intended to achieve this New State by violent means".

The accused were found not guilty and discharged. One year later, in 1962, the 5th Congress of the South African Communist Party adopted its programme "The Road to South African Freedom". Declaring that the main content of the national democratic revolution in South Africa is the national liberation of the African people, the SACP programme stated:

"The main aims of the South African democratic revolution have been defined in the Freedom Charter, which has been endorsed by the African National Congress and the other partners in the national liberation alliance. The Freedom Charter is not a programme for socialism. It is a common programme for a free, democratic South Africa, agreed on by socialists and non-socialists. At the same time, in order to guarantee the abolition of racial oppression and White minority domination, the Freedom Charter necessarily and realistically calls for profound economic changes: drastic agrarian reform to restore the land to the people; widespread nationalisation of key industries to break the grip of White monopoly capital on the main centres of the country's economy; radical improvements in the conditions and standards of living of the working people. The Communist Party pledges its unqualified support for the Freedom Charter. It considers that the achievement of its aims will answer the pressing and immediate needs of the people and lay the indispensable basis for the advance of our country along non-capitalist lines to a communist and socialist future. To win these aims is the immediate task of all oppressed and democratic people of South Africa, headed by the working class and its party, the Communist Party".

The Source of Violence

In fact it is the racist State itself which is the source of violence and hostile intent in South Africa. The limitation of the franchise to whites only meant that the majority of the population were ruled by force, compelled to obey laws which they had no part in framing. As the SACP Programme states:

"In their long and difficult struggles the national liberation organisations of South Africa, including the Communist Party, have always sought peaceful methods of struggle. In the past they have counselled non-violent methods not because they are cowardly or believers in pacifist illusions but because they wished to avoid the bitterness and bloodshed of civil war. But the ruling class has invariably replied to non-violence with violence; to peaceful protests with suppression and police massacres of unarmed men, women and children. The Nationalist Government has closed, or is closing, every channel of legal protest and normal activity. It is openly preparing for civil war".

Today that civil war is raging with ever increasing intensity. The Communist Party itself was banned in 1950, the ANC in 1960 during the State of Emergency which followed the Sharpeville shooting. In 1963 the notorious detention without trial laws were introduced, opening the way to systematic torture of political prisoners, over 60 of whom have been done to death at the hands of the security police in the intervening years. On the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre the police perpetrated another massacre at Langa township in the eastern Cape, mercilessly gunning down unarmed mourners who were on their way to bury the dead of a previous police shooting. Scarcely a day passes without reports of further shootings in the townships, whose soil is stained with the blood of the people's martyrs. Nor is the State violence confined to South Africa. In its alleged pursuit of the ANC and the forces of "international Communism", the South African military have undertaken wanton aggression against every frontline state, subverting and undermining their governments and committing mass murder in an attempt to establish the hegemony of apartheid over the whole of Southern and Central Africa. The illegal occupation of Namibia and the barbaric treatment of its population continue in open defiance of the United Nations and international law. The prospects of peace and democracy recede ever further as the apparatus of state becomes increasingly militarised and the President and his army leaders acquire ever new powers in their bid to defend the indefensible and impose their will on an increasingly rebellious population.

The mere statistics of conflict and confrontation are frightful in themselves. Unknown hundreds of men, women and children have been slaughtered by the police and military during the first months of 1985, whilst Minister of Law and Order Le Grange admitted in Parliament that a total of 287 people had been killed by his police "in the execution of their duties" in 1984. Several hundred thousand were arrested under the pass laws and the jails are 40% overcrowded, with a daily average population of 108,000, including 3,568 infants up to the age of 3 years. Official figures show there were 469 strikes last year involving 181,942 workers with the loss of more man days than in any other year of our history. (*Financial Mail,* 12.4.1985). Nearly 40,000 people, overwhelmingly blacks, were sentenced to lashes last year; over 5,000 Africans were removed by force from their homes to the Bantustans. Nearly 350 people are serving sentences for "crimes against the security laws", several hundred are in detention without trial, and the number of people facing charges of treason and subversion is at an all-time peak. Add to this that the economy is in a state of crisis, with the rand plunging and unemployment and inflation soaring, and it is understandable that all sections of the population are in a state of uncertainty and apprehension. Yet the State forbids them to get together to discuss their problems, open-air and indoor meetings being placed under crippling bans and restrictions.

The death and devastation which are spreading through South Africa today are signs of the total breakdown of the apartheid order. It is abundantly clear that Botha's new constitution can do nothing to stabilise the situation, and his new crop of "reforms" — the abolition of the Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts, the grant of freehold land ownership rights to a handful of Africans etc. — will be equally unsuccessful because the conditions of the majority of the population remain unchanged. The shootings, jailings, beatings and evictions continue unabated.

So does the rising tide of anger and resistance on the part of the masses. As Alfred Nzo, secretary general of the African National Congress, said in a message marking the 6th anniversary of the execution of Solomon Mahlangu, the struggle in South Africa has entered a new and decisive phase as South Africans rise up to swell the ranks of the liberation movement in the intensified fight against apartheid. The masses are fully geared, ready to fight and die, in their determination to have apartheid dismantled. Everywhere the people are in action, not only in the big cities but in tiny villages and townships in the platteland of the Free State and Natal and every one of the Bantustans. The battle has been carried to such levels that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the racist authorities to govern the country.

Revolutionary Onslaught

The Commissioner of the South African Police, Gen. Johann Coetzee, complaining that the flow of information from the townships had dried up significantly, told the Kannemeyer commission into the Langa massacre that the country was facing a violent revolutionary onslaught led by the ANC and the SA Communist Party with the intention of making the country ungovernable.

"The main aim of the programme was the politicisation and radicalisation of the black masses with the intention of an eventual restructuring of South Africa socially, politically and economically". (*Rand Daily Mail,* 11.4.1985).

Gen. Coetzee's complaint was that this was to be achieved "on lines other than constitutional", but who is to blame for that when the constitution has no place for the majority of the population? As Dr Beyers Naude, secretary general of the South African Council of Churches, commented in a lecture at Rhodes University, "the time for a politics of purely verbal protest had passed in South Africa", because in the face of government terror, "protest without accompanying commitment to meaningful action is meaningless". What South Africa urgently needed now, he said, was a visible act of resistance to the injustice of the system "which is leading our country to the brink of chaos". (*Rand Daily Mail,* 2.4.1985).

South Africans may differ over what constitutes "meaningful action". It largely depends on the degree of deprivation, violence and terror to which they have themselves been subjected. Gen. Coetzee gave the Kannemeyer Commission details of the "meaningful action" taken by the African National Congress in the period between 1976 and March 19, 1985 — 275 acts of what he called "terrorism", 61 directed against the police, 125 against the economy, 56 against state and public buildings and members of the defence force, 33 directed against people he called "private citizens", but whom their fellow citizens regard as traitors and collaborators.

Yes, the racist regime is being subjected to a violent revolutionary onslaught, and yes, the masses are being politicised and radicalised. But it is not faceless agitators who are to blame for the slaughter and carnage which are spreading to every corner of the land. As publicity secretary Mosioua Lekota told the UDF congress in April: "Let the world understand that the people of South Africa are not guilty (of provoking this violence). The blame must be put at the door of those who support apartheid". The government is unable to govern except at the point of a gun.

It is from the depths of their tragedy and suffering that the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa, white as well as black, now look to the

Freedom Charter for inspiration in their struggle to escape from the nightmare of their present existence. True, there may be some opponents of the regime who still fight shy of the Charter because they are reluctant to identify themselves with the ANC or the SACP whom they regard as its authors and principal sponsors. Nevertheless, outside the ranks of the racists and a handful of ultra-leftists, few can be found to repudiate any of the basic priciples expounded in the Charter, which today unites Congressites and non-Congressites, Communists and non-Communists, freedom fighters and pacifists, in a broad front pledged to overturn apartheid and complete the first stage of the national democratic revolution. It is the universality of its appeal which is the greatest strength of the Freedom Charter. It satisfies the deepest cravings of our people, and points the only way forward to a democratic and peaceful future.

In this 30th anniversary year of the Freedom Charter, let all its supporters pledge to intensify their efforts to bring about its realisation "in our lifetime". We may differ as to ways and means; but we are united in our conviction — which events daily prove to be well-founded — "that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities" and "that only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief".

OUR PARTY PAPER

The 6th Congress of the South African Communist Party held towards the end of last year decided on a number of measures to strengthen the Party organisationally and reinforce its role not only as a constituent part of the liberation alliance headed by the African National Congress but also as the independent vanguard of the South African proletariat. The main statement issued by the Congress declared:

"The task of spreading the liberating ideas of Marxism-Leninism, especially among the workers and the youth, has assumed greater urgency than ever before . . . Imbued with proletarian internationalism, we must continuously sharpen our ideological weapons to combat backward nationalism and chauvinism in all its forms and spread an understanding of the connection between racial oppression and capitalist exploitation. The perspective of a future socialist society in South Africa must be spread with greater vigour".

As an important step towards implementing this decision we can report that the first issue of a new series of the newspaper *Umsebenzi,* subtitled "Voice of the South African Communist Party", began circulating underground in South Africa during the first months of 1985. It is an attractively produced 12-page tabloid explaining in simple language the aims and working methods of the Communist Party and discussing a number of vital issues confronting the masses of our people in their fight for national liberation, socialism and world peace.

An editorial note on the front page headed "Forward with Umsebenzi" states: "Organisation is everything! To meet the enemy we have to be organised. And the spread of understanding is the very beginning of organisation. That is why we look upon our newspaper as an organiser.

"Without a revolutionary theory the struggle is like a ship without a compass. But political theory is of little use unless it leads to revolutionary practice. Our job as revolutionaries is not just to explain the world; we have to change it!

"An understanding of Marxist-Leninist thinking and the way our Party applies it to South African conditions will help us organise the path towards the future. We aim through *Umsebenzi* to create a bond between all revolutionary units and cadres and guide those still searching for a way of struggle. We aim, above all, to stimulate revolutionary understanding and commitment leading to organisation and action.

"The liberating ideas which we South African Communists are spreading are truly hated by the racist enemy. They will do all in their power to stop our people from reading and circulating our message. You must therefore be careful. Work out safe ways to spread *Umsebenzi.* Use it as a weapon in the struggle for liberation and socialism."

The main front-page story, headed "Seize the Time!", deals with the crisis confronting the racist regime and calls for an intensification of the people's offensive on all fronts. The insoluble economic and political problems of the regime and the growing strength of the revolutionary forces have opened the way, as never before, to people's advance, says the paper. "Capitalism and apartheid equal oppression and misery; both must be smashed".

The paper contains a summary of the deliberations and decisions of the 6th Congress of the Party together with an extract from the new constitution adopted at the Congress setting out the aims of the Party. Other articles in this issue deal with the history of May Day, the basic rules of secrecy in underground work, the lessons of the November 1984 stay-away in the Transvaal, the 40th anniversary of VE-Day and the role of the Soviet Union in

war and peace, and the imperialist policies of the apartheid regime in Southern Africa. Three articles are the first of a theoretical series which will be continued in future issues on political economy, Marxism and violence, and trade unionism respectively. The issue also contains pen pictures of South African Communist leaders Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo and John 'Beaver' Marks ('JB'), and extracts from the speeches of ANC President Oliver Tambo and SACP General Secretary Moses Mabhida on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Communist Party in 1981.

A Glorious Tradition

"Umsebenzi" is the Zulu/Xhosa word for "Worker" and the revival of the name represents the continuation of a glorious historical tradition. When the International Socialist League was formed in 1915 by members of the South African Labour Party breaking away over the issue of the first world war, it called its weekly paper *The International* to promote the ideals of international working-class unity and anti-militarism. In 1921 the International Socialist League merged with a number of other socialist organisations in South Africa to form the Communist Party with *The International* as its official organ.

On January 1st, 1926, *The International* changed its name to *The South African Worker,* and the reasons given for the change illustrate the party's approach at that time to the problems of race and class in South Africa:

"The 'International' was the name chosen at a time when the International Socialist League (SA) stood out in contrast with the social-patriotic SALP for the international fraternity of the working class in the war. When simultaneously it began to stress the need of enlisting all workers in South Africa — irrespective of race or class in the working-class movement — the title became doubly appropriate, and has served to typify the principles of the Communist Party also to this day.

"The new title, however, will emphasise the CLASS basis of the Party's objective, for it is only by virtue of common class interests against a common class enemy that unity of the working-class — international or inter-racial the world over — can be attained, and without unity we cannot win.

"It is hoped that under the new title further illumination will be thrown on the dark places of the workers' life in town and country, and finally that the workers of South Africa will rally round our organ and make it completely their own."

In 1930 the publishing office of the paper was transferred from Johannesburg to Cape Town and the issue of April 18, 1930, contained the word "Umsebenzi" in its masthead for the first time. The editorial stated:

"The present number of *The South African Worker* (now having a bilingual title) is the first to be printed in Capetown, whither our publishing office has now been transferred. A serious effort is being made to publish weekly once more. The importance of a weekly paper to the Communist Party is obvious to all. It must be emphasised, however, that immediate and continued financial support is essential if we are to continue to publish weekly.

"The day has gone when the CP could depend on large donations from Europeans. Today our membership is composed largely of poverty-stricken Non-European workers and peasants; what white members we have now are not exactly rolling in money. As a paper voicing the grievances of the black masses we must rely primarily on the support of Non-European sympathisers; and indeed a state of dependence on white financial support alone would not (be) a healthy one.

"We shall continue to receive gratefully any 'windfalls' we may get from these comrades, but the basis and stand-by of our paper must be donations from the exploited and oppressed slaves of Africa. We therefore appeal to all Native and Coloured supporter(s) of the Party to boost 'Umsebenzi' for all they are worth and to contribute as liberally as they can afford to our printing fund . . . we are confident that Umsebenzi can be made to pay its way on the basis of a mass circulation among Africans".

A Powerful Force

In their book *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950* H. J. and R. E. Simons note:

"The paper soon became a powerful political force among Africans and Coloured, attracted hundreds of them on the platteland to the Party, and filled a gap left by the closing down of Abdurahman's *A. P. O.* Publishing articles and letters in the major African languages, as well as in English and Afrikaans, *Umsebenzi* attained a bigger circulation, covering a wider area, then either the *International* or the *Worker* ever achieved . . . the party grew in size and influence".

During 1936 the name of the Party's journal was changed back to *The South African Worker,* though *Umsebenzi* remained as a sub-title. This was a period in which the threat of Hitlerism hung heavy over the world, and a new slogan running across the head of the paper in each issue was: "For a United Working Class Front Against Imperialism and War". This was also a period, however, in which the "white terror" against the Communist Party, combined with internal squabbling, had reduced the Party to a low ebb. In March 1938 *The South African Worker/Umsebenzi* was forced to cease publication through lack of funds.

The Communist Party has had other official newspapers, with other names, in the years since then, notably *Inkululeko,* which has carried the Party message in both legal and illegal times. (*The Guardian/New Age/Spark* series which ran from 1937 to 1963 was never the official organ of the Party, which was the reason why it was able to continue functioning legally after the banning of the Party in 1950.)

The new *Umsebenzi* has proud antecedents to live up to. The first issue — bright, lively and hard-hitting — gives us every reason for confidence that it will fulfil its mission with distinction.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

"The removal of white power was not contemplated in the new constitution, only the meaningful division of power guaranteeing the protection of minority rights" — the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr Chris Heunis, speaking in the white House of Assembly on March 8, 1985. (As reported in the Johannesburg *Star* 9.5.1985.)

THE FIGHTING YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA

Vital Role in the Liberation Struggle

By Thandi Dube

The mass political struggle in our country in the recent past has been characterised by the vital role that the youth and students have come to occupy in the broad frontline of the liberation formations. They have been teargassed, incarcerated, shot at and killed in cold blood by the trigger-nervous colonial apartheid troops. The racist regime's brutality has produced the opposite of what was intended; it has not deterred the young people but it has actually fanned the fires of defiance in the struggle for a great ideal — a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa. These events have opened a new page of student and youth political mobilisation on a scale unprecedented in our history.

But for revolutionaries it is not enough just to be aware of the death-defying militancy, the extreme sacrifice displayed by our gallant youth. It is not enough even to applaud the young people and assure them with statements that they are the hope of our future. Our most important responsibility to the young people is to give them correct political guidance and leadership. By this I mean giving them such political education as will

enable them to understand the causes of their indomitable drive to struggle, the character of their social composition, the capabilities and limitations imposed by that character, the historic conrete context within which this struggle takes place and the nature of the regime.

This approach to them dictates that the role of our young people be examined from the standpoint of and in relation to the genuinely revolutionary ideology, the ideology of the most consistent revolutionary class — the proletariat.

The Student Contingent

It is students who, as a specially organised contingent of the youth, have placed important milestones along the path of struggle. It was a group of students in Fort Hare who initiated the ANC Youth League. The ANC Youth League effected a transformation of the ANC into a truly active mass resistance movement with a radical programme of action. It was the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) which after the banning of the ANC inspired the formation of the Black People's Convention (BPC), National Youth Organisation (NAYO), etc. and thus re-opened the chapter of semi-legal mass organisations and made an important contribution in mobilising our people. It was the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) which led the 1976 student demonstrations which initiated events that marked a watershed in the history of our struggle. It is the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and Azanian Students' Organisation (AZASO) which placed again the principle of non-racialism firmly on the agenda of mass democratic organisations in our country.

The contribution of our student community is not simply a matter of history. They have become a factor which the regime has been forced to contend with and try to talk into obedience. They are no longer simply dismissed by the regime as "inexperienced hotheads". They have become a front which the regime is now trying every trick in the book to win over or at least to neutralise. For example, after many running battles with students, the regime has been forced to address the issue of representative bodies of students in the schools. The regime has been forced, thanks to the heroic blood shed by thousands of students, to consider what it calls Pupils' Representative Councils (PRC's) as opposed to the COSAS demand for Students' Representative Councils (SRC's). The regime insists on calling students "pupils" while the students call themselves "students".

In the South African context of the developing mass democratic struggle, the term 'student' has acquired a particular political content. It indicates a

person who studies, but a person mature enough to be able to tell the difference between colonialism and oppression on the one hand, liberation and democracy on the other. It indicates the ability to tell the difference between racist apartheid education and genuine education geared to serve the interests of the people as a whole. It indicates the ability to know what must be done to achieve the dictate that the "doors of learning and culture shall be opened", and which is the vanguard force to lead that struggle.

The term 'pupil' as used by the regime, on the other hand, has acquired the meaning of a person of school-going age, but a person young and immature enough not to be able to tell the difference between bad and good education. It indicates a person who cannot choose ideals but is just a passive receptacle of Bantu Education. It indicates a person who is young and immature enough not to be able to stand up and demand his/her rights unless instigated by "agitators" and "terrorists".

In the context of our developing mass democratic struggle we believe that Hector Peterson, Emma Seathekge and many others from primary or secondary schools, who have died locked in battle with the racist troops in the townships, deserve SRC's and not the regime-structured PRC's.

The Social Composition of our Students

We need to delve a bit into the socio-economic conditions that have produced this calibre of students. I have illustrated above that the effective participation of students in our struggle is not a new thing. We have important examples which stretch back for decades. Yet it would be a mistake to consider the current involvement as a mere replay of history. The current depth and width of the participation have their own new features and have been produced by developments in the contemporary scene.

The mining revolution transformed South Africa from a primary producing country based on agricultural products into a country with a modern economic base. It stimulated the growth and development of every other sector of the economy. After the Second World War, the growth of the economy began to place emphasis more and more on the manufacturing sector which by the beginning of the '70s constituted almost 30% of the GDP annually.

The growth of the productive forces and the development of science and technology placed an increasing demand on the education sector. The importation of foreign science and technology, directly by the local companies or indirectly by foreign companies (estimated at 2,000), put a particular demand on the scale and function of education.

The number of skilled and educated white people produced by white schools became more and more inadequate to cope with the growing South African economy. This situation was made worse by the need for more and more white personnel to join the South African Defence Force and the police force to keep under control the mass upsurge and the growing armed struggle led by the ANC in South Africa and SWAPO in Namibia.

This meant that the economy was running into a serious problem. The 'solution' of importing skilled white labour from Europe was inadequate and too expensive. Another factor to contend with was the growing army of unemployed black people.

The regime, faced with this situation, began to twist its own arm. It smoothed the rough corners of job reservation — but only the rough corners. The few ghetto schools were overflooded — producing just enough manpower to oil the cogs of the South African economic machinery. Tribal colleges were increasingly littered with rickety prefabricated structures. Vista colleges for blacks were hurriedly set up in strategic areas.

The direct consequence was that we saw a 'notable' expansion of the student population and a qualitative change in its social composition. Students are not a social class in the Marxist sense. They originate from different class backgrounds. This difference in their social class background reflects itself in the way they respond to the call for a revolution. Lenin said that students are tied by "thousands and millions of threads . . . to the middle and lower bourgeoisie"(!) But in present day South Africa our students are tied by circumstances and the apartheid laws to the black working people in general and the working class in particular. This is evident mainly in relation to students at the primary and secondary schools, and to a more limited extent also in relation to students at the bush colleges. The latter are there not because the black working class can now afford to take their children through university, but because capital, especially monopoly capital, needs educated manpower to run its massive economy and the regime wants manpower to run its multiform bureaucratic apartheid structure. So capital has set up all forms of establishments to seek out 'bright students' in front of whom they dangle scholarships. These scholarships put strict conditions as to what field of study to follow in order to decide the student's ultimate deployment.

So black students today are no longer drawn only from the black middle class and professionals. A long time ago black people, even those in the urban areas, still owned a few herds of cattle in the rural areas. So at the beginning of each semester one ox would be sold in order to take the child to university. The manner of acquiring money was not as simple as I have indicated, but

what I am trying to say is that some people could eke out a living. That possibility has now gone with removals, heavy capitalisation of rural farming by big business, Bantustanisation, etc.

Black students today have to do without parents who can make a living. Every day after school a black child has to do gardening in the white suburb where his mother is a washerwoman in order to get money for school books. During week-ends or vacations he/she must seek temporary jobs. Grants given by capitalist agents are too little and have got strings attached like "don't get involved in politics at school." So right through the school career, the black schoolchild gets a chance to taste the reality of being a working person. In addition to the fact that he/she originates from a working class or peasant family, he/she begins to get a better view of his/her future plight as a worker. So as a black student grows up, he/she does not only develop deeper hatred for the apartheid system but also begins to identify with the working class consciousness.

Ghetto schools, bush colleges, filthy prefabricated structures, all influence the development and outlook of student organisations. These factors also ensure that there is a greater possibility for mass discussions, collective suffering, organisation and activity. Once an idea drops into the student collective, it spreads like wildfire. This situation allows a greater possibility for organisation and collective action and also for ideas to spread to other schools faster because of extramural action and activities between schools.

But of course the most immediate and glaring factor stimulating student mobilisation is racist apartheid education. This experience hits the black student directly between the eyes — he/she cannot escape it. Who can fail to be shocked by Verwoerd saying:

> "When I have control of Native Education I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them. . ."

The black student today also lives through a post-1976 period, a period which was ushered in by the events of the Soweto uprisings — events which were triggered off, among other things, by the growing economic crisis The regime until this day is still paddling in that economic quagmire.

Students and our Revolution

What concrete role can our students play in the struggle for liberation? Can they lead the revolution?

I have said above that students are not a social class. The role of leadership in revolutions is a class question. Once the citadel of colonialism and apartheid has been stormed and conquered, the power must pass to a coalition of classes in the national democratic stage. The vanguard of that coalition is the working class.

Nevertheless the death-defying militancy of the students is undoubtedly a great factor in stimulating the masses, in winning over more and more forces, in propaganda and armed propaganda and in storming the citadel. In our struggle we have many such examples. The Soweto uprising is one graphic exaple. COSAS and the Alexandra Youth Congress were in the forefront in organising the Alexandra bus boycott in 1985. The examples do not mean, however, that the students can lead the revolution. Their qualities — energetic minds that are still searching for ideas, minus social responsibility, etc. — usually make them a good barometer of the socio-economic pressures in a society. As Lenin put it:

> "The proletariat will not be behindhand. It often yields the palm to bourgeois democrats . . . within the walls of universities, from the rostrum of representative institutions. It never yields the palm, and will not do so, in the serious and great revolutionary struggle of the masses".[2]

It is only the working class which has got the most advanced theory, a class that is constantly growing, which can lead our revolution. The working class is in the factory, at the point of production, the base of society. Students cannot bring about a revolution by occupying school buildings or by marching out of their campuses or premises. I remember well during SASO days that we once entertained the idea that if we could instigate a march-out in all tribal colleges we could bring about a socio-economic change because, as we rationalised, the advanced South African economy cannot do without the manpower from the universities. It would also be wrong for students to think that by embarking on a long-drawn-out school boycott and 'forcing' the workers into a passive stay-away, the ruling class would be 'starved' into political submission. This would only be feasible if such a stay-away was a national general political strike with bold political demands. Such a strike in the present South African context could not be a 'passive' stay-away, it would undoubtedly be accompanied by insurrectionary flares on barricades, petrol bombs, handgrenades, gunfire and other forms of mass activity. We have already witnessed a dress-rehearsal of this in the recent past.

The Youth Contingent

The rapid growth of the scientific and technological revolution, the growth of the productive forces, have enhanced early awareness and maturity on the part of the youth. I think in all of us the voices of our parents still ring in our ears as they tell us that they did not know this or that at their age.

Capitalist mass media have become widespread and cheaper. While they churn out a lot of distortions and lies, they also open the windows into the

capitalist world of fantasy and anarchy. Electric and electronic gadgets are now widespread. All these things, although of limited access to the black child, provoke many questions in his/her mind at an early age.

It is also important to note that our young people live at a time when most of Africa is liberated. They live at the time of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Those events have a great psychological and moral impact.

The constant horror of apartheid disparity, hunger, removals, Bantustans, etc. bombard the young mind of the child. Today people increasingly talk of Mandela, Bram Fischer, Robben Island, the Freedom Charter, etc. This is the stage when the youth is searching for ideas, displaying impassioned curiosity and energy. At this stage the youth is like a hot iron; they can be bent into any shape -- they can even be made to support positions which are counter to their interests. So that is where the wisdom of Marx comes in when he says:

> "The more enlightened part of the working class fully understands that the future of its class, and therefore, of mankind, altogether depends upon the formation of the rising working class generation."[3]

To speak of a rising generation, however, is not to advance a concept outside classes and social groups. Hence the organisation of all social sections of the youth demands particular attention.

Clearly the foundation of youth organisations should be the young workers, rural youth and youth in the Bantustans. This foundation should forge a very strong alliance with the student youth and the unemployed youth. The slogan, 'Work is a right not a privilege', cuts across the whole spectrum of the youth and ensures unity not only with those who are not employed, but even with those who are employed and those who are 'unemployable'. A campaign like the Education Charter campaign ensures that not only the student youth but all literate youth have the possibility to go out and forge a wider alliance with other sections of the youth who are illiterate as well as all democratic forces in our revolution.

The sections of the youth which most cry out for organisation are the unemployed youth and the *lumpenproletariat.* These sections of the youth are of the most heterogeneous nature. They include an increasing number of school drop-outs and victims of age-limit laws who swell the army of the unemployed. These are usually youth who because of their social background (usually working class and peasant families who can't pay for education) and general disgruntlement with the regime, have got a great potential in the struggle. There is also a large number of young people who have run away from the barren rural and Bantustan areas and carry with

them such peasant and working class backgrounds as make them the natural allies of the working youth. Lastly there is a section which has never been employed or at least never been regularly employed. While this section is the most easy to be used by the enemy against the interest of the revolution, it is at the same time capable of the most heroic and daring deeds in the interest of the revolution. All this calls for our cool nerve and a painstaking effort to draw them into specific avenues of our struggle.

We should, however, guard against being romantic about what this or that section of the youth is capable of, and analyse them concretely in the context of our struggle.

Ideological Diversion of the Youth

One of the most dangerous methods that the regime employs to manipulate the consciousness of the youth is that of promoting mass market culture, the product of imperialist ideology. It is aimed at recruiting the youth to a regime of passive consumerism by offering them a pre-packaged lifestyle; a false culture. This is the culture of imperialism which promotes the exploitation of man by man, individualism, artificial wants leading to spiritual starvation and obscurantism.

The cultural apparatus in the hands of the regime and its capital allies includes the apartheid school system, sport, theatre, radio, TV, book publishing and censoring, recording companies, popular magazines, newspapers, etc. Control of this aparatus has the power to determine public perceptions and manipulate mass tastes on a scale unprecedented in history.

The youth is made to believe that one can only succeed if one is clever and diligent. Isolated examples are given of those who "made it from rags to riches". The true heroes of our struggle are not depicted — Vuyisile Mini, Solomon Mahlangu, Kippie Moeketsi, etc. Those who are depicted are the punk singers in Sun City and Las Vegas whose climax of performance is vomiting on the microphone. Cultural imperialism, pretending to benefit everyone and purporting to be above racism and apartheid, in fact draws upon race ideologies to justify the rungs of status in its ladder of social rewards.

One of the more camouflaged ways of achieving the same goal is to ferry thousands of the black "best brains" to study in the USA and Europe. The aim of this move is three-pronged. Firstly it is to take what imperialism calls the best brains away from the point of struggle in South Africa. This of course is based on the mistaken bourgeois ideology which places the interests of individuals above those of society. Secondly it is an attempt to foul the mind

of these students by exposing them to imperialist decadence so that on coming back home they should uphold capitalist values. Thirdly it is to 'arm' these students with tactics of frustrating the forces of change, revolution and socialism. For example more and more students are taken abroad by transnational corporations to study industrial-related subjects which concentrate on how to emasculate the collective strength of the working class and their unions.

One of the methods the regime is employing on a grand scale is to flood schools with 'legal Marxist' literature designed to obfuscate the scientific ideology of the working class.

Educating the Youth

The most effective defence of the young people against ideological diversion is to forge an alliance with the working people. But in our national democratic struggle it would be wrong to over-emphasize the need for this alliance at the expense of an alliance with all the other potential allies in the national democratic revolution. One of the guiding lights is always to make friends for our revolution.

So we need to caution that it is not the most militant or revolutionary-sounding slogans that bring results but action that is best suited to the actual conditions faced by the youth and students at the time. It is always important to emphasize the correlation of theory and practice. So the approach to youth education cannot be the same at all times and in every locality or region. The main starting point is the source of political aspirations of the young people in the practical conditions of life. After the correct identification of the practical objective situation the youth face it becomes important to try to harmonize this situation with the subjective factors of that youth grouping.

One significant factor about youth and student organisations in our country today is that they see beyond immediate demands and aspire to a fundamental change in the socio-economic situation. The relationship between the two levels is very important because it is through practical involvement in the struggle inside the classroom that the majority of youth can be won over for a wider understanding of issues. This involvement deepens their understanding of the regime, it builds loyalty, dedication and leadership. This requires consideration of the forms of struggle, clear understanding of the immediate and long-term demands. The use of forms which are either too extreme or inadequate can jeopardize the achievement of the very limited demands. Hence strategy and tactics must be clearly identified. For example boycott as a tactic must be constantly evaluated and

enriched so that it consolidates organisation. Sometimes the boycott weapon must be shelved when the danger begins to emerge that it is likely to lose its effectiveness.

A point to be stressed is the need for independence of the youth organisations. This is one way to ensure that experience is acquired and to build leadership, discipline and organisation. The fathers of Marxism warned against cradle tutelage of the youth by organisations of the older generation. They taught against fearing the youth. Stifling the development of the youth challenges the tenet that the youth is the reserve, not only of the future battles, but even of the present. This however does not mean that organisations of the older generation should refrain from criticising the youth organisations in a comradely manner. This criticism must be patient and persuasive, always avoiding creating ill-feeling.

Youth organisations must then ensure streamlined structures that will ensure active participation by all members, election and accountability both horizontally and vertically, youthful life within the organisations and their development as living organisms.

The youth have a very important role to play, but they must be aware that those who want to exaggerate their role might not be doing it out of human error but with the aim of causing mischief and ideological diversion to serve class interests that are opposed to the interests of the youth. The youth and students should not be counterposed to the working class and they should not be isolated from the broad democratic forces of liberation.

One practical example of the victory that the young people have scored in establishing an active alliance with the broad democratic forces is the support which comes from the civic organisations and the parents. This support has enabled students to sustain mass student boycotts to the point of making the issue of student opposition to apartheid colonial education one of the major campaigns of the current stage of our struggle. The young people must search for forces to forge alliance with. For example the professional classes, intelligentsia, cultural workers, etc have a history of struggle. The hardships these people face under apartheid draw them objectively into the broad democratic front.

Another important ally of the democratic black youth and students is the democratic white youth and students. So far, the most visible expression of this alliance is the existence of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). But we have also seen this possibility in the white youth contingents in organisations like Jodac, COSG's and the ECC's. Although NUSAS has had a chequered career, since the black student breakaway

which resulted in the formation of SASO, NUSAS has been moving closer to the broad democratic struggle. That breakaway itself is one of a few examples of breakaways that had a positive aspect under the concrete circumstances of the time. Positive active participation of black students had been continually frustrated by the roughshod chauvinism of white students. It was an example of 'unity and struggle of opposites' that had exhausted its maturity and had to 'break' for further development to take place. The break engendered a qualitative development. As one white NUSAS leader put it afterwards, the events which led to the formation of SASO forced white students to realise that they had not been doing enough. NUSAS on the one hand and COSAS and AZASO on the other today have scores of possibilities to launch joint campaigns which can graduate them into a truly effective grassroots alliance of democratic students.

The above example does not mean that we should encourage breakaways once we run into difficulties. This was an example which had its own historical and circumstantial specifics. Our task is to work for unity, and continue to work towards winning more friends for the struggle. The broad democratic organisational base our people have created guarantees the possibility of the continuation and consolidation of this unity.

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IN SEARCH OF IDEOLOGY

A Critical Look at Azapo

by Toussaint

The "Azanian People's Organisation" — Azapo — is not much accustomed to wide attention from the world's press, radio and TV. Nor does it usually attract much attention from South Africa's internal media. But suddenly for a few days in February, it became the centre of an international wave of attention. The occasion was the highly publicised visit to South Africa of US senator Edward Kennedy — a putative 1988 Presidential candidate, engaged on a fact-finding inspection of apartheid and all its consequences.

It is difficult to avoid some feelings of cynicism about his public tour, conducted throughout in full blaze of media publicity; he was seen in all the right places— in Nobel prize-winner Tutu's bishopric and outside Nelson Mandela's Pollsmoor prison, at Winnie Mandela's place of banishment and in the streets of Soweto; he delivered himself of some newly-discovered criticisms of apartheid, and iterated a newly-discovered determination to see that the US changes from its present "constructive engagement" stance to a consistent anti-apartheid one.

Opposition to apartheid has become the USA's fastest rolling bandwagon. Everyone who would be anyone in American politics — except of course dyed-in-the-wool Republican Party office-holders — is lining up to join the demonstrations outside South Africa's US embassies, to be ritually arrested

in a campaign initiated by Reverend Jesse Jackson's 'rainbow coalition' supporters. The campaign for US disinvestment from the apartheid state is becoming a central issue of foreign policy, suitably challenging of Reaganism and yet comfortably removed from the really stinking cesspools of US policy on America's own doorstep in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Chile — which still have bipartisan support of Democrats and Republicans alike.

Whatever the mix of genuine conviction, political opportunism, and personal image-building which underlay the Kennedy visit, it was not without significance for the future of South Africa. His public condemnations of the apartheid regime were the most public by a senior Western statesman since Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech in 1960; they must have carried some weight in the English-speaking world outside, especially that part of it which has been comfortably relaxed in tacit support for the regime — and for the profits that can be creamed off from the system; they must have been of some encouragement and cheer also to those who struggle inside South Africa against an enemy seemingly richer, better armed, and better supported internationally than themselves. Whatever purpose the visit served for Kennedy himself, therefore, for South Africa's opponents of the regime it served some purpose. Some of them observed it in silence; some came to applaud. But only Azapo came to jeer.

And the world's media, always more interested in seeing the famous get egg on their faces than in boosting their message, turned the Azapo jeers into the main story of the whole visit. The small numbers of Azapo supporters who turned up at Kennedy's publicised appearances with placards of protest and shouts of 'Go home!' stole the headlines. For here, to the undisguised joy of the media — and especially of the South African establishment press and radio — was the spectacle of the Senator being humbled by those whose cause he purported to espouse. It was a classic Man-Bites-Dog type of story; and the media milked it for all it was worth. Azapo had its day in the sun, stealing the front of the Kennedy stage. It was theatre of high order. But what were its politics?

If one is to take the posters of Azapo demonstrators at the Kennedy events as serious political pronouncements, the feeling cannot be avoided that one is dealing here more with theatre than with the serious politics of struggle. The placards rang with left-wing rhetoric: 'No to capitalism! No to imperialism!' and 'Yes to socialism.' The rhetoric was reinforced by Azapo spokesmen — as, for example vice-president George Wauchope:

> "We regard the Kennedy visit as promoting imperialism and international capitalism. This was confirmed by his meeting with 600 businessmen in

Johannesburg.... His main aim is to see that there is stability in South Africa; he is not interested in the complete overhauling of the system..."

Or Kenny Mosime, president of the Azapo student wing, Azasm:

"Our rationale for the rejection of Kennedy is based on the socialist principle underlying our struggle against capitalism and racism. ... There is no doubt that his visit is calculated at quelling this heightened spirit of the black working class against imperialism."

But what are the politics behind this militant, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and socialistic phraseology? In what sense are we to understand Azapo's concept of imperialism to which it says decisively: No!? Is it no to Kennedy, or to US senators only? Or are these mere symbols of 'imperialism'? And if so, what *is* the reality of the imperialism they symbolise? One searches the Azapo statements in vain for an answer. Can it be that Azapo confuses the reality of imperialism with its symbols? I think not. There are mentions in Azapo's publications of 'seminars' and 'study papers', which seem to indicate that some thought is being given to defining their concepts of 'imperialism', 'capitalism' and 'socialism'. But whatever definitions may be emerging, they are not made public, perhaps for reasons of security in South Africa's ubiquitous and pervasive police state, or perhaps because Azapo considers that definitions and the theory of politics belong to the leading cadres alone, and that the public must be satisfied with slogans. It is hard to tell which.

But one cannot avoid the impression that Azapo's politics is concerned more with the declamations and slogans of left-wing radicalism than with the strategy and tactics of struggle. The declamation, the political gesture of militancy seems to be the primary purpose and the justification of policy; action, struggle appear to be secondary. Is this judgment too harsh? Perhaps more light will be thrown on this if we turn from the minor matter of Kennedy's visit to more important matters — for example to the statement of 'Aims & Objects' of Azapo, as adopted at its founding conference:

To conscientise, politicise and mobilise Black workers through the philosophy of Black Consciousness[1] in order to strive for their legitimate rights.

To work towards the establishment of an educational system that will respond creatively towards the needs of Azanians.[2]

To promote an interpretation of religion as a liberatory philosophy relevant to our struggle.

To promote and encourage research into various problems affecting our people.

To expose the oppressive and exploitative system in which our people are denied basic human rights.

To work towards the unity of the oppressed, for the just distribution of wealth and power to all people of Azania.

There are several significant aspects of this statement, which is quoted in full. First — and most importantly — that the only items which point in the direction of concrete political action are:

mobilising black workers to fight for their rights;

working towards a new educational system;

working towards a just distribution of wealth.

Thin though these aims are, they are nevertheless the beginning of a programme of political action.

Second, that the preponderance of the 'Aims & Objects' deals with ideas, propaganda, philosophy — not with action:

To conscientise and politicise;

to reinterpret religious philosophy;

to promote research;

to expose the nature of the system.

There is nothing strange in this weighting towards ideology and propaganda rather than action in Azapo's founding manifesto; that reflects fairly accurately the organisation's origins within the ranks of the black students and young intelligentsia. Azapo's involvement in the student milieu has continued until today, despite deliberate attempts by most of its leaders to turn it ever more sharply towards the working class — which explains the fiercely working-class and workerist rhetoric of recent years despite the fundamentally non-working-class basis of its membership.

South Africa's schools and colleges have for long been a hot-bed of discontent and agitation against the authorities; in many episodes of struggle students have set the standards of militancy and of preparedness for sacrifice for their elders — and other occupational groups — to follow. Some commentators have sought to depict the students as the real leading core of the coming South African revolution, as others some years back tried to portray the Paris students of the 1968 events. But whatever theorists may try to make of the students, in South Africa they remain a small fraction of the black population; and whatever discrimination they suffer through second-class citizenship and Bantu Education, they nevertheless remain a comparatively privileged sector of that black population, with prospects of better pay, better jobs, more comfortable livings and futures than the rest.

Role of the Workers

Azapo has not — despite its student origins — subscribed to the view of the students as the leading revolutionary core. On the contrary, the Preamble to

its founding statement of Aims and Objects is heavily weighted with references to the *workers*, in such phrases as:

> "recognising that Black workers in particular are responsible for creating the wealth...
> workers are subjected to the most inhuman and ruthless laws;...
> the worker is more determined to see freedom and justice..."

and so on. There is, however, no explanation of what it is that sets the worker apart from the rest of the population; and in fact the Preamble almost suggests that the terms 'workers' and 'people' are interchangeable — for instance:

> "Believing that Black Consciousness be developed and maintained as a true philosophy for *workers*
> (we) therefore resolve
> to found a political movement which will express and manifest the aspirations of the Black *People* in Azania." (My emphasis throughout. T.)

But ideology does not remain static in a changing world. Since Azapo's formation the confusions of ideology have gradually given way to a clearer concept of the special character of the working class as the most revolutionary element in society, though the confusion between 'workers' and 'people' remains. At the National Forum meeting in Johannesburg in July last year in which Azapo played the leading part, the Manifesto was adopted included inter alia the following:

> "The Black working class inspired by revolutionary consciousness is the driving force of our struggle for national self-determination in a unitary Azania. They alone can end the system as it stands today...
> It is the historic task of the Black working class and its organisations to mobilise the oppressed people in order to put an end to the system of oppression and exploitation by the white ruling class."

The impetus for this shift in ideology towards the working class has been the rapidly advancing trade union organisation and union struggle of recent years, in which the black workers have removed the matter of which class leads the struggle from the realm of theory and debate, and demonstrated the answer.

But no organisation which seeks to lead a major political struggle can possibly wait upon events, or allow ideology to be propelled from behind by the masses. Azapo aspires to lead. A resolution from its January congress calls for Azapo to make itself available to "... lead, give direction, and actively participate in" the struggles of the workers and the trade unions. But with what ideology? If the founding Aims and Objects still hold true, it sets out to 'concientise and politicise and mobilise' — and now lead black workers through the "Philosophy of Black Consciousness." One searches the

philosophical outpourings of the Black Consciousness movement for an ideology which copes with the concept of the working class as a leading force of the social change. In vain. On the contrary, black consciousness highlights the need for individual and personal change rather than social change, for mental change rather than political. Thus for example, the first issue of the Azapo journal 'Frank Talk'(March 1984):

> "Briefly defined therefore, Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression — the blackness of their skin — and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude."

And again:

> "Merely by describing yourself as black, you have started on the road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as subservient."

These statements (reprinted by 'Frank Talk' from a 1971 document, thus giving them the apparent Azapo seal of approval today) are fair enough a statement of the positive elements in the Black Consciousness movement — the need for black people to recognise their blackness rather than to seek to conceal it by acting 'white'; to take pride in self and their own colour; to join together to end subservience to white domination.

An Act of Faith

But as a philosophy for overturning the social order, for ending imperialism or for constructing socialism, for enabling the working class to play its historic role of organising and leading other classes to the new society, it is hopelessly inadequate. Put together all the relevant statements in the same document, and one is left with what is at best an article of faith, a belief rather than a comprehensive political ideology:

> "Being black is not a matter of pigmentation — being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.
>
> The interrelationship between the consciousness of self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance. Blacks no longer seek to reform the system... Blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish. Such a major undertaking can only be realised in an atmosphere where people are convinced of the truth inherent in their stand."

Maybe. But this leaves unanswered the most important questions: What *is* 'our emancipatory programme'? And where is it leading? What do blacks wish to come out of the transformed system'? How, in fact, are people's wishes and aspirations to be translated from the field of desire into political and social reality? It is questions like these which every serious organisation that seeks to lead action for social change has got to grapple with and answer.

Azapo does not set out just to change mental attitudes, and inspire pride and confidence in 'blackness'. It sets out in fact to lead the social transformation: Azapo's Cape vice-president Cyril Jones is quoted in 'Azania Frontline':

> "Our immediate task is to organise the oppressed under the leadership of the working class. The role of Azapo is to give the working class struggle a radical and revolutionary content, to guard against the hijacking of the struggle.... Azapo has certainly gone far beyond the original black consciousness organisations. It has identified and analysed more precisely the ideological dimensions of the struggle... in particular our ability to relate to the socialist content of our struggle."

Of this there can be little doubt. But one searches Azapo written documents in vain for clarification of these analyses and ideological dimensions. It may well be that, as suggested before, in South Africa's atmosphere of police surveillance and persecution of radical ideas, Azapo chooses not to make public the fruits of its private ideological explorations, except in broad generalisations about the leading role of the working class. Or — on the other hand — it could be that Azapo's 'ideological dimension' is merely windy pretension, covering a real nakedness of political theory. No organisation which seeks to lead the working class can hope to establish its leadership by merely making public claim to "leadership."

It has to establish its claim in two ways: first, by publicising its theories and ideologies, and seek to win support for them from amongst the most advanced, thinking workers; and second, by taking part in every struggle of the working class in line with that ideology, thus testing out its ideology by practical demonstration. Ideology preserved as the secret only of the would-be leaders becomes sterile academism; ideology reduced to a few pithy commonplaces for public consumption becomes mere sloganising. In either case, it does little to raise the consciousness of the masses or to lead them in action. Ideology needs to be stated in public and tested in action; it needs to be subjected to constant re-appraisal and to debate and reconsideration in the light of experience. There is no sign that this is yet any part of Azapo's own 'ideological dimension'. If the dimensions of Azapo's ideology to which Jones refers exist, they exist only in private; and in public there is seen only the revolutionary and radical sloganising. This is again perhaps a sign of Azapo's preference for the dramatics of political proclamation, rather than the grind of public political action; for the *gestures* of radicalism rather than radical *actions*.

It is a truism that no organisation can hope to carry through a root-and-branch transformation of society by instinct and flair alone. What is needed is a theory of social transformation, to serve as a guide to action. Where action is

not a primary aim, the need for an adequate theory can naturally be neglected. But any organisation seeking seriously to pass beyond desires to practical political action — and Azapo today certainly proclaims that purpose — needs an advanced theory; it needs to know how its own society operates, in order to understand in which direction it is developing and in which direction it can be moved. It needs to know what characteristics the new social order should have, what is possible, and how the possible can be attained. It needs to know not only how to generate political mobilisation and action, but also how to decide the strategy and tactics of that action at every change of a constantly changing social scene. Without such a theoretical basis, action will be blind action, and its consequences seldom those aimed at by its organisers.

It is impossible to suggest that there are not, within the ranks of Azapo, the intellectual resources and seriousness to develop just such a theory. But one looks in vain for evidence that they are in fact doing so — evidence, that is, other than the pronouncements of leaders such as that quoted above. There are, of course, always two ways to develop a theoretical solution to problems: to learn from and build on the experience of others; or to start from first principles without past references — in the manner of one who wants to carry his mealies to market but cannot do so until he has first invented the wheel and axle for himself. Azapo seems to me, in many ways, to be trying to reinvent the wheel — which may well of course result in a means of getting the goods to market; but not in our lifetime!

Lessons of History

This conclusion is reached after much reading of Azapo material — speeches, seminar papers, resolutions and published articles. All of these deal with South African problems as though these are newly discovered and therefore the answers have to be newly invented. No one, it would appear from Azapo statements, has ever before grappled with the problems with which Azapo now comes face to face; no one has provided any answers worth considering, any experience worth taking into account. One is given the impression that Azapo has discovered for itself the new truths — that the working class is destined to be the leading force in changing society, that the enemies of the people are capitalism and imperialism, that the transformed social order should be based on socialism. There is a total absence of any recognition that anyone has been here before or contributed anything to these discoveries, and no one whose explorations provide a base for further development. Marx — a long dead foreigner — is referred to very

occasionally, usually in a disparaging manner not to show what might be learnt from him, but rather to demonstrate a superior wisdom; as for example Quraish Patel at an Azapo symposium:

> "Orthodox Marxists look at a doctrine and mould it to reality; whereas black consciousness looks at reality and moulds its doctrines accordingly" (whatever that means).

But of all the vast accumulated experience and wisdom of the whole world's working class, of all the vast richness of theorising on working class problems from Marx and Engels and Lenin and many others, there is almost no sign. Nor — in particular relation to South Africa's own unique and difficult problems of transformation — is there any reference to the seventy years accumulated experience of the African National Congress, or the sixty years of the South African Communist Party. Reinventing the wheel of knowledge may be a salutary discipline for an isolated and remote searcher-after-truth in a stable period of history when time is of no importance. But in South Africa today, with its rising tide of mass struggle and clear signals of impending upheaval and revolution, such an exercise can only be described as an escape from the real world to the unreal — to a world like a stage set, where real life is not being lived but only being simulated.

There are, naturally, reasons for Azapo's blanket of silence over all other experience and theory. In part at least the reason must be that attention to the theoretical contribution of other movements, other philosophers, other politicians, will reveal that black consciousness does not hold the key to all political struggle; nor is it the total foundation for all serious analysis of the contemporary South African political scene. Black Consciousness — the movement which embraces Azapo amongst others — is in fact the Johnny-come-lately of South African politics. It cannot be denied that, even in the short life since its founding in 1978 it has made a substantial contribution to raising feelings of self-confidence and awareness in the black majority. But to suggest that it has done so by starting from first principles, by its own discoveries of previously undiscovered facts of black life, would be so to distort history as to make it unrecognisable. Far from starting its political work and ideology from first principles, Azapo in fact started from an advanced base, prepared for it by the ANC and the Communist Party amongst others, long before even the phrase 'Black Consciousness' had been coined in the USA and elsewhere.

In South Africa, the idea that blacks are in no way inferior to whites was pioneered by the African National Congress, as was the idea of black unity spreading across the barriers of tribalism, language and ethnics. The idea that

the working class can wield decisive strength through trade-union combination, and through political organisation could lead the way forward to a new socialist society, was pioneered by the Communist Party. The idea of all black groups — African, Asian and Coloured — united in political action was pioneered by the various Congresses. These bodies pioneered also the forms of mass struggle and mass organisation which have carried the whole South African people forward to the advanced trenches they occupy in today's battles. Black Consciousness and Azapo did not prepare the ground; they found it already prepared and well cultivated. They did not have to go through the titanic struggles against tribalism which were fought — and won — by the African National Congress. Nor did they have to sow the seeds of confidence in unity and trade-unionism amongst the working class, which had been commenced by generations of Communist and other militants before them. Black Consciousness is thus not the beginning of radical South African politics, but its latest outgrowth. It is not the fountainhead of black militancy or black struggle but only a part of its growth and development.

There is, in fact, a long historical thread of development of the ideology of South African resistance and struggle. The thread can be followed back to some of the earliest of resisters to colonisation and conquest. And all along that thread thinkers, writers and leaders have been distilling from the experiences the lessons which will provide an ideology of resistance and struggle which can lead to South African liberation. Azapo stands not at the beginning of that weave, but near its most recent edge. I stress this point, not because there is any special merit to being first in the table of time, but because I believe it is the fact that they are not the first — not the discoverers of consciousness and militancy and socialism — that explains the blanket of silence which Azapo maintains over all those who have gone before, over all their rich experience and all the theories summarised from that experience.

Their silence about what they cannot claim as their own, reveals a lack of seriousness at the heart of Azapo. For our country is in many ways unique in Africa; it has the longest and most varied experience of struggle, and of dealing with and attempting to solve the many extremely difficult problems which bedevil a multi-class and multi-racial society such as ours. We have accordingly through dire necessity — not through any special cleverness or talent — developed a rich body of theory based on a rich history of success and failure, of advance and retreat, of correct decisions and errors.

It is unreal to imagine that a country beset with such difficult problems of struggle and change as ours can hope to go rapidly or smoothly forward without studying that theory and learning from it, without taking on board

the lessons which are to be learnt from the past. Azapo's failure to do this for what seems to me to be petty, self-important motives, denies the benefits of experience not only to the masses engaged in today's political struggles; it denies them also to Azapo itself, and thus reduces the organisation and its prospects very considerably. To illustrate the point:

Earlier in this article I drew attention to some confusion in Azapo usage of the terms 'people' and 'working class' and the use of these two terms as though they are interchangeable, each describing the same thing. I am not concerned with the semantics of this, bur rather its politics. It follows surely that if 'the people' are the same as 'the working class', then either non-working-class blacks are excluded from 'the people'; or alternatively, there are no black people who are not working class. The confusion in Azapo's statements makes it difficult to understand which of these logical consequences is believed — if either. We are told in Aims and Objects that Azapo was formed to "... express and manifest the aspirations of the Black People." And immediately thereafter we are told in Frank Talk that "... being black is a reflection of a mental attitude. ...Black people — real black people — are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man."

No mention of class here, and correctly not. For in South Africa as almost everywhere in the world, "the people" are made up of elements drawn from several different classes. However one may regret the fact, there *are* blacks who can 'hold their heads in defiance' who clearly are middle class — traders, merchants, professionals, small employers; and not just amongst the Indian and Coloured groups only, but increasingly — as a result of government policy — amongst Africans as well. Government now deliberately seeks to create a privileged black middle class — still discriminated against in various ways, but nonetheless benefitting from some of the hand-outs of the system — and to set that class up as a counter to the radical and revolutionary class element — the black working class. It cannot assist the political struggle to fudge this fact, or gloss it over in confusion.

Need for a Class Philosophy

Yet there are good reasons why Azapo does so. And those reasons lie in its acceptance of the philosophy of black consciousness not as a *part* of a wider philosophy of socialism, but as the *whole* of it. Black consciousness, without a doubt, can provide a common outlook — a mental attitude, which can attract both workers and black middle class elements. But it cannot and does not provide a uniquely working-class philosophy and view of the world, such as

will enable the working class to realise itself as a class, to fulfil its historic destiny of overthrowing the present capitalist order to create a new working-class based socialist order. A class programme requires a class philosophy and class world outlook; it cannot hope to triumph without one, even though the broad general lines of an all-class philosophy like black consciousness may provide a starting point, a frame of reference for the development of a specifically class outlook.

Black consciousness is a philosophy which seeks to unite and unify all classes of blacks under one umbrella; it cannot satisfy the *special* class aspirations of the working class; in the end it must muffle those special class aspirations, in order to present an acceptable face to all blacks of all classes who — by Azapo definition — are those who accept themselves as black and are prepared to defy white supremacy.

How then is one to solve this fundamental dilemma? Only by conceding that black consciousness — whatever its general merits — is not and cannot be a *total* philosophy for social and political revolution led by the working class; it can only be a *part* of a total philosophy. It is no good for Azapo to fudge this dilemma. It grows straight out of the nature of South African oppression, and its creation of a class-divided black population with a predominant working-class sector.

How can one combine diverse elements in a single struggle? What is the relationship of one class to another? No doubt — as with the task of inventing wheel and axle — Azapo may itself some day come to a resolution of these complex problems. It has not done so yet; and in the rising tide of struggle in which we now live in South Africa, it is unlikely to be given time to solve the problems for itself starting from first principles.

We in the Communist Party of South Africa should not be surprised that Azapo has not, in its short history, found the answers to all dilemmas, or developed for itself an ideology as fully considered and rounded out as we would desire. As our own recent anniversary should remind us, it took our party 40 years of debate, inner-party struggle and persistent re-analysis of our position to formulate our present comprehensive view of the problem of class and nation, which form the basis of our 1962 Party Programme. And even that formulation is still not finite, not complete, but is constantly being discussed and reviewed, widened and enriched by the fertilising addition of new experiences in action. There is no reason to suppose that what took our Party forty years, starting from the advanced base of world working-class experience enshrined in the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism, is likely to be accomplished again in less time by anyone starting from first principles.

There is, of course, no reason any more for Azapo or anyone else to start from first principles. The historic record of those forty years and its analyses is available to them. The rich treasure house of Marxist theory is available to them. If they choose to ignore all that — to invent the whole thing anew for themselves — it can only be for one of two reasons: because bloated self-importance and pride will not allow them to admit that they have anything to learn from others outside their ranks; or because, having pinned their faith on black consciousness as their total creed, they are not serious enough in their politics to be prepared to admit that perhaps — after all — there is less than *total* knowledge and *total* truth to be found therein. And that therefore black consciousness philosophy must be extended to encompass the experiences — universal and South African — which extend far beyond the mental frontiers of the ideology of 'blackness'.

Azapo says it is committed to a socialist solution and dedicated to pursuing that objective through mobilisation of the masses. It perceives correctly that its aim can only be achieved through the radical and revolutionary power of the working class leading the revolutionary process. It correctly identifies the bedrock on which the apartheid state is built as capitalism and imperialism. If Azapo is serious in its politics it will be serious enough to study and learn from the accumulated experience of others who set out on such a path before them. In so doing they will find, as other organisations and revolutionaries have found before them, a clear class ideology to replace today's confusion. And without these confusions they will see the way clear to forging forms of alliance with those other radical and revolutionary forces — including the ANC and the Communist Party — who are struggling forward in the same direction.

Azapo's response to this challenge is the test of its seriousness. If it fails, it can look forward to nothing except a walk-on part in the theatricals on the sidelines of struggle.

Footnotes:

1. "Black Consciousness" can be used to describe two separate phenomena — either an organised movement of people of like mind; or an individual state of mind on the matter of 'blackness'. I have used capital letters throughout for the first meaning, and lower case letters for the second — except in direct quotations where I have followed the usage in the original which may or may not have the same significance.

2. Azapo and some other, usually small, Black Consciousness organisations have taken it on themselves to rename our country 'Azania'. I do not follow them in this usage. It seems to me somewhat arrogant for a minority sect to assume the right to rename the country, without any opportunity to test public opinion on the change or secure general consent for it. When the time comes to reconstruct South Africa, the name will be decided by the people. For the time being, therefore, I stay with the term 'South Africa'; and only use the term 'Azania' when I am quoting directly from another source.



THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The new constitution adopted by our Sixth Congress is another milestone in the history of the South African Communist Party. The aims of the Party which are set out in Section Two of the constitution should be studied by all revolutionaries.

AIMS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party is the leading political force of the South African working class and is the vanguard in the struggle for national liberation, socialism and peace in our time. The ultimate aim of the Party is the building of a communist society, towards which it is guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The establishment of a socialist republic in South Africa requires that political and economic power be firmly placed in the hands of the working class in alliance with the rural masses.

To this end, the Communist Party aims:

A) To end the system of capitalist exploitation and establish a socialist republic based on the common ownership of the means of production;

B) To organise, educate and lead the working class in pursuit of this strategic aim and the more immediate aim of winning the objectives of the national democratic revolution which is inseparably linked to it. The main content of the national democratic revolution is the national liberation of the African people in particular, and the black people in general, the destruction of the economic and political power of the racist ruling class, and the establishment of one united state of People's Power in which the working class will be the dominant force and which will move uninterruptedly towards social emancipation and the total abolition of the exploitation of man by man;

C) To participate in and strengthen the liberation alliance of all classes and strata whose interests are served by the immediate aims of the national democratic revolution. This alliance is expressed through the liberation front headed by the African National Congress;

D) To spread the widest possible understanding of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and its application to South African conditions;

E) To combat racism, tribalism, sex discrimination, regionalism, chauvinism and all forms of narrow nationalism;

F) To promote the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the workers of South Africa and the world and to participate in and strengthen the World Communist Movement.

THERE ARE NO SHORT CUTS TO VICTORY!

Lessons of organisation from the underground, by the William Khanyile unit of the South African Communist Party

Everyone agrees that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness or awareness of the working class. The questions are — "How is it to be done and what is needed to do this?"

Some sections of the broad democratic movement say — "Let the workers wage their economic struggle against the employers. In the economic struggle the workers come up against the political regime."

We also hear people saying — "Let the intellectuals conduct the political struggle by their own efforts."

We even hear it said — "Use terrorism to wage the struggle."

Lenin said of these suggestions — "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

What Lenin meant was that those who make these suggestions are trying to find a road the struggle should take. They suggest straight roads that are easy to follow but they are also the wrong roads. They will not lead our struggle to victory. Some of these roads may bring a few temporary improvements. However, our people need to totally destroy the South

African political economic system based on apartheid and capitalism. We need to replace it with a system that is just to all of us and not merely a little bit better for some of us.

Lenin had much to say against leaving workers alone to struggle only against their employers. He spoke of some strikes as no more than outbursts of desperation rather than struggle. Some of our earlier strikes over retrenchment were of this nature. They were acts of desperation rather than acts of struggle to seize power for our class, the working class. Nevertheless we gained courage, an idea of organisation and experience although many strikes were painfully defeated. These strikes were an awakening of consciousness.

With the appearance of more and larger unions, often unregistered emergent unions, we see a new stage of workers' struggle opening up. Strikes have in some cases been more carefully organised.

In the 1970's, after a long period of reconstruction on the labour front following the state onslaught in the 1960's, labour struggle and class consciousness took another step nearer each other. The massive strikes in the Durban area in 1973-74 were to involve almost 100,000 workers in over 300 stoppages across a wide industrial field. Strikers drew on support from the townships and the effects filtered back into the rural areas. They were to unleash the slowly growing power of unionists and they were to make demands concerning recognition as well as for material gains.

The workers knew they were acting outside the narrow labour law confines of the state. They were aware that they were as workers directly challenging the capitalist state. But at that time they were only challenging the labour law and the state acted to contain the challenge. They amended the labour laws at the end of 1973 to extend the structure of works and liaison committees and so ensnare again the efforts of the workers. It is a tribute to their spontaneous militancy and consciousness that the workers were to brush aside this new state apparatus.

The Bantu Labour Relations Regulations Act of 1973 and its Liaison and Works Committees have been "retrenched" by the action and growth of the unregistered unions throughout the 1970s. In the 1980s the new unions are unlikely to be so easily beaten. But the 1973 stoppages were little more than a demonstration of worker power because they achieved little at the time. They were spontaneous, unorganised, poorly led, poorly supported by existing unions — the strikers were easy meat for the employers to sack, to intimidate, to starve back to work. The workers lacked education, many were illiterate and there was little support from the intellectuals.

The Miners' Strike

The recent miners' strike advanced definite demands, was more carefully timed. Known cases and instances in other places were discussed. Public statements to the press and other workers made clear the role of the miner and of all workers in creating wealth, along with their demand for a greater share of that wealth for those who labour to produce it. Cases such as this represent the class struggle in embryo. It is the child in the womb — it must be given life, nursed, fed, given strength to grow into formidable adulthood. But as it remains, it is only in embryo.

Taken by themselves these strikes while often being another step forward are simply trade union struggles and not the broad democratic struggle itself. These strikes and many others, as at Rowntree's and Simba's, mark the awakening antagonisms or hostilities between workers and employers. The majority of the workers, however, are not yet fully conscious of the irreconcilable antagonisms of their interests to the whole of the modern capitalist political and social system. What Lenin was explaining to us is that not all workers are aware that their interests as wage earners, workers and producers are the opposite of those of the owners of the wealth, their managers and their government, etc.

It is not enough to win better wages and working conditions from the owner of the factory, farm or mine for this year. Our people suffer in strikes and as things are it would be necessary to strike again perhaps next year, and the year after ... each group of workers in his place of work. These strikes are reactions to our needs as workers to find more money for families in the barren bantustans, for increased hostel and township rents, school fees, bus fare increases, to cover the increasing price of basic food. Each year our people all over South Africa have had to face grinding hardship as all these demands on wages grow month by month. Strikes have brought detention of our leaders, workers have been killed by the police thugs, many have been fired and many have been driven off to the bantustans. The working people of South Africa suffered again in 1984 but they have learned and they have advanced.

The lesson becomes clear. It is not enough to struggle for better wages year after year. What use is better wages in your pocket if your brother is thrown out of work in the struggle? What use is better wages in your pocket if Putco demands your hard won increase in fare hikes? The puppet town council or administration board holds out its hand for more rent. The farm owners and food factory owners will not let you or your family eat until you pay more for mealie meal, milk, cheese, bread, tinned fish, meat... The list has no end and

children always need clothes and school fees. Small, hard won wage increases never cover our needs, stop the infants dying in the rural areas, provide better teachers and more schools, better housing. Still there is apartheid — the racism of the pass and control of where you go, what you do, who you are with.

We know all this. This is the lot of the South African worker who was not born white. We know that the trade union struggle and the strike weapon will not end all our troubles. We know that sometimes it wins us some more cash which is very necessary. It teaches us the value of united struggle. It teaches us the value of an organisation, the union, devoted to improving the conditions of the worker. The trade union struggle shows us the boss is the enemy, so is the government who makes laws to oppose our union, so are the police who attack and harass us by pretending to enforce the laws.

Building Class Consciousness

All of this we are learning by examining and discussing our daily life, our work and the trade union struggle. Knowing and learning this much means we are becoming aware of our position as workers. We are becoming aware that all workers from the North of the Transvaal to the Cape, in factories, farms, mines, offices, shops, vehicles — wherever they work for wages — have a lot in common. This is a part of what is meant by being class conscious, and with this consciousness we enter class struggle.

Recognising our common problems and way of life is not the whole of class consciousness. We must recognise the enemy, and the enemy takes many shapes. The enemy is not only our boss and our neighbour's boss — it is all bosses. It is the chambers of commerce, industry and mines that organise our bosses. It is the banks, insurance companies and finance houses and their owners that organise money for our bosses. It is the government that makes laws to control how and where we work, what we learn at school, sends police and soldiers against us, prevents us struggling for a better life for our people while protecting the bosses who enjoy a beautiful life — thanks to our labour.

Class consciousness does not even end here. It has to develop further. Workers have to develop a struggle on all fronts against the enemy bourgeoisie — the owners of the wealth of our country. It is the bourgeoisie for whom we work, who sell us our goods and control the state which is the government, security forces, administration boards, education and health departments, etc.

We have said that our more recent strikes represent our consciousness or awareness in an embryonic form. These struggles remain a spontaneous movement. That is to say they have been limited to a specific demand or provocation. They have arisen quickly and have been limited in the demands they make, the number of people involved and the action taken. They have not represented a part of a planned attack on the enemy. These are not yet what Lenin called Social-Democratic struggles. We have yet to develop this Social-Democratic consciousness but we are moving in that direction.

How is the workers' trade union struggle to be transformed and expanded into a mass political struggle to overthrow the apartheid capitalist state? It is only by recognising that nothing less than a socialist and democratic form of government can create the conditions for peace, equality and prosperity with an end to apartheid and capitalist exploitation so that the real ambitions of the working classes can be fulfilled.

Can the class conscious workers alone bring about the socialist and democratic South Africa? History says no. The lessons of history confirm that South Africa is being propelled down the road to the people's revolution and the creation of the people's state. The seeds of the socialist and democratic consciousness have been sown among some of the leading sections of the workers. As Lenin has explained in a similar situation in Russia before the revolution — this consciousness has to be brought among the workers from somewhere else. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness in the beginning. Only by association with other sections of the population, and in this case particularly the intellectuals, will the consciousness of the struggle become clearer and deeper, will we be able to map out the road of struggle and unequivocally identify the goal of a socialist democratic South Africa.

Role of Intellectuals

Not all the intellectuals will join the struggle as our allies. Intellectuals are frequently of petty bourgeois origin, that is they are often the sons and daughters of small property owners and businessmen, professional people, often from the families of teachers, priests or civil servants. Due to their home background and the means of their family, some of those who are intelligent, those who show ability to reason and understand, have been well educated and enabled to develop their abilities. These people are intellectuals. The working class does not lack intelligent people with this ability. But too often these people lack the means and education to develop their ability. Some

intellectuals use their ability, education, training and experience to serve the enemy and to preserve their privileged background.

Certain intellectuals will wish to assist us and serve in our struggle. Some will attempt to mislead us and sow confusion because they are unable to overcome their own petty bourgeois mentality, origins and self-interest. They are not complete intellectuals, as clearly their powers of analysis and reasoning have not reached mature development. They still require assistance to understand the historic role of the working class and the unalterable lesson of history that the working class will lead a revolutionary alliance of the people to overthrow the repressive regime and install a democratic government of the people committed to socialism.

Here in South Africa we have the situation of the working class developing a trade union consciousness. Each day the press notes new groups of workers engaging themselves in active struggle with their employers. At the same time we have seen the rapid expansion of a politically active broad democratic front against the government which includes large sections of workers, professionals, intellectuals, community organisations, youth, etc. We have both the awakening of sections of the working people to a greater political understanding of working life and conscious struggle and a conscious youth in the townships armed with some of the basic ideas of socialist and democratic theory and beginning to realise that worker and student have a common struggle.

The lack of consciousness of the common struggle was the greatest handicap in the events of 1976 in which there was marked misunderstanding between student and worker. The community itself also suffered from suspicion and resentment, not so much of the students' objectives, but of their methods. The students were then at a very early stage of developing political consciousness and discovering their revolutionary potential. The government, employers and reactionary elements within our own people, that is those who wish things to remain as they are and resist change, together played on the divisions and lack of preparation among our people.

The revolutionary enthusiasm of our youth made them hasty in judgement and impatient in action. Enemies accused them of disrespect for their elders. Undisciplined sections engaged in unnecessary intimidation where persuasion and explanation were what was called for. Vulnerable sections of workers were intimidated by the bosses with expulsion back to the Bantustans if they supported the essentially urban struggle. Certain sections of workers, persuaded that their survival was at stake, were further driven into physically attacking youth and progressive sections in the townships. For a year we suffered and we learned.

The year of 1984 saw our struggle reach a new more advanced stage. In the years between 1976 and 1984 we patiently set the foundations of new structures for struggle. If we examine them of course we find they are no more than people organised. What is new is their strength. The new strength is the growing political consciousness of the working class. The struggle is now firmly embedded in a growing union movement which is slowly finding and taking its position in the broad front of organisations which is mobilising ever greater masses of our people.

1984 is the title of a terrible tale by British author George Orwell. It is a tale of intimidation, terror and misery for the masses by a fascist state. It might have been our story but we have reversed Orwell's 1984 in South Africa. The United Democratic Front formed by the people's own organisations has successfully confronted the Pretoria regime's manoeuvre to divide the struggling people and create stooge governments in a racist parliament. In spite of intimidation of voters and detention of organisers the people boycotted the elections. The government's exercise in forcing these elections only succeeded in showing us that we can resist the power of the government, that we have the courage to fight, we have the ability to mobilise, that our people are becoming more politically conscious, that we can effectively demonstrate that unity is strength.

The great mobilisation also identified certain weaknesses. We always knew there were traitors and stooges and some of them now think they are part of the government — that is, part of the enemy. Some of their supporters, like the Bantustan puppet ruler supporters, include some of the most backward sections of our people and we must make the effort to win them to our side not alienate them. We must work on awakening and establishing their political consciousness. They must be awakened to the fact that they belong with the great mass of the South African people when they sit down to eat. They must realise their future is not to chew over the bones tossed to them by the apartheid regime, to sweep up and swallow the crumbs left by the bourgeoisie. This can only be done by constant effort, persuasion, propaganda — there is no end to education.

The Enemy Never Rests

This brings us to the problem of continued mobilisation after a major heroic campaign. It is so easy to feel that we have done our part and will do it again when called. This is a damaging weakness. The enemy never rests. It spies, it collects information, the police raid, confiscate, arrest, detain, torture... Our enemy knows no rest and nor should we. Many of the organisers and

spokesmen of our campaigns are no longer with us. They should be used as one focus of the ongoing struggle to increase political consciousness. The township stooge councils are being given their own crooked cops to better control and intimidate us, squeeze higher rents from us and guard their ill-gotten gains. These tools of the regime are a fine target for many practical lessons in political consciousness.

Other weaknesses that have revealed themselves repeatedly include the fact that we are not yet sufficiently strong to mobilise nationally — this will be overcome. Another is the fact that the press is not ours, nor is the radio and television. They are owned by the bourgeoisie and the regime and they sow confusion. We need our own newspaper to serve the working class and increase our political consciousness.

Of course there is a mountain of laws, intimidation and repression between ourselves and our newspaper. It also requires a vast amount of money. But we can make our beginnings. We do not lack the talent to identify our problems and our goal. We have our own writers. We do not lack the courage to gain access to duplicators and make use of them. Although we have little of the great wealth we produce we cannot withhold that little from the service of the struggle. Our people have a great hunger for education, a great thirst for truth which we must try by all possible means to satisfy. By producing leaflets, broadsheets and circulars we make a great contribution to the struggle. Our small leaflets not only help to satisfy our people and combat the lies and confusions of the bourgeois press but they are an opportunity to advance the political consciousness of the working class. Our leaflets should not only appear when a call for action is made, they should appear from time to time explaining day to day events of significance to our people in the socialist and democratic struggle. Reproduction of letters and brief articles can serve the same purpose as hand-produced wall posters. Every little bit counts.

The Value of Propaganda

Getting out propaganda develops political consciousness and new forms and levels of political action. Someone must initiate the process; it requires one or more writers, discussion of content, language, style and how it will be reproduced. It must be reproduced clandestinely in work places such as offices, or on a hidden duplicator, or it may be legally printed and paid for, or it may be reproduced on a hand-made primitive box press. In each case the political case must be argued for the work and funds to pay for it. Distributors must be persuaded that the material is worth the intimidation that often

follows getting it into the hands of the people in the community, school students or workers in the work place. Means of clandestine distribution may need to be discussed. All of this activity helps to build up working cells amongst more advanced sectors of the working class. At the same time it brings valuable material into the hands of those who need it. This can inspire new thought, discussion in informal and formal groups and so deepen the political consciousness of greater numbers of our people from the writer to the reader or listener who cannot read.

A final weakness which requires every effort to resolve is the various tendencies to "independence of action" by certain trade unions and trade unionists. There has been great debate concerning whether unions should involve themselves in the political activity of a democratic front they do not control. Political consciousness is growing in sections of the union movement and those sections are being drawn into the common struggle but it is a slow process. The answer is not to attack, condemn and dismiss those who have accepted the "workerist" approach that divorces them from the political struggle. Political consciousness of the major role of the organised working class in the democratic front must be argued for at the work place and within the union. Workers are commuters, parents of school students, tenants, consumers of goods. Workers must be singled out in the organisation of all these groups for particular attention to develop their consciousness of the strength of unified workers bringing their full force to the struggle of unified communities. Trade unions fail their members when they relinquish their responsibilities for advancing the worker's position when the worker is outside the workplace.

The division of unions, as in the case of the miners' and then the metal workers' unions, is no solution to political dispute. To divide one union is to create two weak unions which can only advantage the boss and the state. This is why the Chamber of Mines has no qualms over recognising five miners' unions in 1985 and giving all of them access to workers to compete with each other, undermine unity and militancy.

It is quicker and easier to win a section of members and lead them out of a union than to win a whole union. The same applies to federations of unions. If the objective is to deepen and widen workers' political consciousness then little is normally achieved by ignoring the main arena of struggle and founding another federation to further divide worker unity as in the case of the proposed Black Consciousness union federation. The main thrust in trade union growth must be for more members, an end to the proliferation of competitive unions and towards one mighty unified progressive and

democratic federation. Such an organisation with a strong sense of political consciousness and responsibility would naturally find itself a leading force in the broad democratic struggle. The task lies at the base. Greater political consciousness must be brought to each individual worker. United they will make of their organisation what is required — a democratic politically conscious trade union.

The Fight to end Slavery

In 1834 the government of the day passed the Slave Emancipation Act. Working people could no longer be bought and sold and treated worse than cattle by their owners, the bourgeoisie. One hundred and fifty years later in 1984 saw us struggling for the full emancipation of all South African people. The events of that year in the Vaal triangle have shown the bourgeoisie that their days as the rulers and owners are coming to an end.

The lessons through the intervening years have been learned. The errors of 1976 were not repeated and note was taken of the successes of the anti-constitution and anti-election campaigns of 1984. The Transvaal Stayaway Committee consisted of over 30 organisations including the U.D.F., AZASO, COSAS, Transvaal Indian Congress, Release Mandela Committee and 15 trade unions which united the support of over one million workers and students in a two-day stay away from work and school. The campaign demanded that rent increases stop, fare increases stop, detainees and political prisoners be released, student grievances be met, community councillors resign and the security forces be withdrawn from the township.

Intimidation took the form of army and police occupation of townships. Leaders were arrested and government propaganda was distributed. The people stood firm in the face of bird shot, rubber bullets, batons, tear smoke and dogs. 7,000 armed soldiers and police could not intimidate the people of Sebokeng on October 23rd. One week later the police again used tear gas and rubber bullets at the funerals of those they murdered at Sebokeng, Bophelong and Sharpeville. 900 mourners were arrested.

As a result of this conscious and united struggle rent rises have been frozen, some rents reduced, community councillors have fled their posts as servants of the enemy, many concessions have been made to school students and the government has lost the propaganda war abroad.

More than that, Botha in 1985 wants to talk to certain elements of the black community and offer concessions. He wants the ANC to declare a truce. He wants to free Mandela. But he does not want to give power to the people!

The political education of the people must go forward. Powerful action is mass united action. Such action is the result of political consciousness. The people have told Botha, the ANC told him, Mandela told him: we do not want concessions with conditions, we want full democratic rights for all without restriction. This can be won and it can be seen on the horizon but the last mile home is the longest mile. There are no shortcuts to victory. Everyone of us must make an effort to unify the working class by building class consciousness. Only when all the people united by the organised working class start to consciously march together will we be able to push aside Pretoria's barriers on the last mile home.

Each of us has an important role to play — in Umkhonto, in the South African Communist Party, in our trade union, in Congress or in the democratic front. Let us make all our jobs easier by making mass political consciousness the priority task of our unit, branch or organisation. In this way we will take one giant step nearer final victory.

§§§

LESOTHO'S STRUGGLE TO SAFEGUARD INDEPENDENCE

By Khotso Molekane

Member of the Political Bureau, Secretary of the Central Committee, Communist Party of Lesotho.

The Kingdom of Lesotho, a small independent African country completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, prepares for its first General Election since the abortive 1970 poll. The electioneering campaign currently takes place against the background of one of the most dramatic re-alignments of forces in the political scene of an African country, of mounting destabilisation of the country by South Africa and the remarkable performance by the Jonathan regime in resisting South Africa's pressure on the country in its struggle to safeguard its independence.

Until the abortive 1970 general elections which resulted in the suspension of the constitution, the proclamation of a state of emergency and the seizure of power by Jonathan's Basotho National Party (BNP), the Prime Minister, Chief Leabua Jonathan, was regarded by many inside Lesotho and in the outside world as "Pretoria's man", while his main rival, Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) leader, Ntsu Mokhehle, was seen by some observers as an "African nationalist", a "Pan-Africanist" and even as a "communist". After Jonathan's "coup" of January 30, 1970, the then South African Prime Minister John Vorster, declared in Parliament in Cape Town: "I agree with chief Jonathan, Mokhehle is a Peking communist".

In one of the most astonishing transformations of political forces in modern African history, today Jonathan has become "Pretoria's most hated man" in Lesotho. He is branded a "communist" by the pro-Pretoria South African press. The influential Church newspapers in Lesotho, the Catholic *Moeletsi wa Basotho* and Protestant *Leselinyona la Lesotho,* the biggest weeklies in the country, have mounted a vigorous campaign against Jonathan in recent years, accusing him of "communist" leanings. All bourgeois opposition parties, the Basutoland Congress Party, the Morema-tlou Freedom Party, the United Democratic Party and the recently established Basotho Democratic Alliance and National Independence Party, stand to the right of the political equation in Lesotho and, in varying degrees, look to Pretoria for moral and material support. Jonathan's main political rival, Ntsu Mokhehle, lives in political "exile" inside racist South Africa and is reported to be under 24-hour South African police protection.

How did Mokhehle and Jonathan swap roles in the short space of about a decade? This question will probably be answered by historians and political scientists in due course, but for the purposes of this article, suffice to recall some chapters in the modern political history of Lesotho in order to understand the shifts of the mid-1970's in Jonathan's policies.

The Basutoland Congress Party — then the Basutoland African Congress — was founded in 1952 under the direct political influence and inspiration of the African National Congress of South Africa. Like its "parent" organisation, the ANC, the BCP was then rightly regarded as an anti-imperialist, nationalist organisation. In fact it was accorded the status of a liberation movement and represented Lesotho in the Afro-Asian Solidarity movement until Lesotho's independence in 1966. The Basotho National Party (BNP) was founded in 1959 as a conservative party, drawing its main support from the chiefs and the clergy. The British colonial authorities, as well as South Africa, adopted a positive attitude towards the BNP while generally negative towards the BCP.

However, the "progressive" phase of the BCP was rather short-lived. By the beginning of the 1960's, the BCP under Mokhehle's leadership had broken with the ANC in favour of alignment with the PAC. Mokhehle mounted a virulent anti-communist campaign against the ANC and the South African Communist Party in the columns of the South African liberal party paper *Contact.* In 1964, the anti-communist witch-hunt in Lesotho, led by Mokhehle, reached its peak with attacks on individual communists by BCP youth. This anti-communist trend within the BCP obviously weakened the party on the eve of the crucial 1965 pre-independence general elections which were subsequently won by the BNP led by Chief Jonathan.

Having won the 1965 elections, Leabua Jonathan moved swiftly to negotiate independence with the British colonial authorities, ignoring all the pleas of the opposition parties for fresh elections, a referendum, etc. Jonathan's response was that all this was delaying tactics of all those who were not serious about Lesotho's independence. In fact Jonathan has interpreted the opposition parties' withdrawal from the independence talks in London in 1966 to mean that they were opposed to independence.

Lesotho was proclaimed independent on October 4, 1966, with political power in the hands of the BNP, while the BCP formed the official opposition. At this stage the BNP was still regarded as a pro-South African party with its leader advocating "dialogue" and closer links with South Africa. The pro-South Africanism of the BNP up to the 1970's cost it substantial following in the country. Most political observers concluded that Prime Minister Jonathan stopped the announcement of election results in January, 1970, when it became clear that his BNP was losing to the opposition BCP. The seizure of power by Jonathan in 1970 led to widespread unrest in the country. The opposition leaders were arrested and the countrywide resistance to the seizure of power was suppressed. However, by 1973 the State of Emergency was lifted, political detainees were released and up to December, 1984, the country was ruled through a nominated parliament with political power in the hands of Leabua Jonathan.

Shift in Jonathan's Policies

A major change in Lesotho's political scene took place in the mid-1970's leading to a structural shift in the BNP's regional and foreign policies. Two main events were responsible for this. Firstly, the opposition BCP or a fraction of it attempted a coup in 1974 which was swiftly suppressed by Jonathan's para-military force. Ntsu Mokhehle and the bulk of the BCP leadership fled into exile in South Africa and neighbouring states. South Africa found itself in an "honourable" position as host country to "refugees" from Lesotho. The stay of Lesotho "refugees" in South Africa and their subsequent activities against the Lesotho government was to become a complicating factor in Lesotho-South African relationships.

Secondly, the collapse of the Portuguese empire and the achievement of independence by Mozambique in 1975 had a positive influence on Jonathan's political development. It became clear to Jonathan that if the Portuguese empire could collapse as it did, apartheid in South Africa could go as well and the future of Lesotho demanded an alignment with anti-apartheid forces, namely the ANC. The Jonathan BNP government

established close political and diplomatic relations with the Frelimo government in Mozambique and that country became a strategic corridor in Lesotho's plans to decrease its dependence on South Africa in its communications with the outside world.

By the mid 1970's strategic shifts were discernible in Jonathan's regional and foreign policies. Firstly, the Lesotho Prime Minister's criticism of apartheid became more consistent. In the international fora, Jonathan and his emissaries became authoritative spokesmen on apartheid, stressing the need for its dismantling as the basis for regional peace and stability. Secondly, the BNP developed closer political relations with the ANC, thus marking what has been regarded as the end of the "reactionary phase" and the beginning of the "progressive phase" in the political evolution of the BNP in general and Jonathan in particular. Prime Minister Jonathan developed an astonishing personal rapport with ANC President Oliver Tambo. On the question of South African refugees in Lesotho, Jonathan took a principled stand that refugees would be granted political asylum in Lesotho, that they would not be allowed to use Lesotho as a base for the subversion of neighbouring countries, that they would not be returned to the country of their origin and that their resettlement in other countries would always be a matter for negotiation with all parties concerned and not a unilateral decision by the Lesotho government.

Thirdly, Jonathan began to pursue a vigorous policy of non-alignment in foreign relations, establishing diplomatic links with socialist countries and visiting those countries in 1983, in spite of warnings and admonitions from the Western powers and South Africa.

R.O.K. Ajulu observes:

> "Within a period of less than five years the BNP government had made a complete about-turn, usurping in the process the mantle of radicalism in foreign policy that had once belonged almost exclusively to the opposition BCP. By so doing, the government was able to improve its own image, both internally and especially externally. Foreign donors, impressed by the brave and radical stance taken by the government, poured increasing amounts of aid into the country. This enthusiasm was not shared by Pretoria, of course. And by the late 1970's it was clear that South Africa had decided that Lesotho would have to be 'persuaded' back into the fold."

South Africa's Reaction: Destabilisation

Internal and regional developments had forced Jonathan to distance himself from South Africa and pursue a more non-aligned policy in international relations. Naturally, South Africa was not amused with these shifts in Jonathan's policies. Its reaction was standard: destabilisation. The forms of destabilisation applied were economic, political and military.

Economic pressure has been applied frequently on Lesotho, which is vulnerable because of its economic dependence on South Africa. The border closure of 1976 with the Transkei was followed by other border closures with the Orange Free State. Movement of goods and peoples was stopped or slowed down frequently as a form of economic pressure on the country. Threats have been made on a routine basis to repatriate the migrant workers in South Africa who number about 150,000. Threats have also been made to withdraw from joint projects. Remittances from the common customs pool with South Africa have been delayed for purely political reasons.

Political pressure has been applied in various ways. The South African propaganda machine consistently portrays Jonathan as a "communist". He has been accused of turning Lesotho into a "communist" base inside South Africa, the Cuba of Southern Africa. Pretoria has established contacts with almost all the opposition parties in the country and has sponsored new right-wing opposition groups like the Basotho Democratic Alliance (BDA). All the opposition parties criticise Jonathan from right-wing positions. They criticise him for granting political asylum to refugees, for "worsening" relations with South Africa and for establishing diplomatic relations with the socialist countries.

Pretoria's destabilisation of Lesotho reached its highest form when it took a military character. "In mid-1979," says Ajulu, "South Africa helped to launch the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) on to the political scene. This was the military wing of Mokhehle's BCP faction." LLA's insurgency against Lesotho from South African bases has developed from the bomb explosions of May, 1979, on strategic installations to more frontal attacks on police stations and units of the Lesotho Paramilitary Force of recent years. Lesotho has no regular army. The Police Mobile Unit (PMU) has been responsible for internal security since independence. Following the LLA's attacks the PMU was enlarged to the strength of about 2,000 and renamed the Lesotho Para-Military Force (LPF). The LPF has come out on top in most encounters with the LLA.

As LLA attacks failed to bring Jonathan back to the fold, Pretoria decided to administer a much heavier blow. Units of the South African regular army invaded Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, on December 9, 1982, killing in cold blood 30 ANC refugees and 12 Lesotho citizens, among whom were women and children. The whole international community was outraged by this cowardly violation of Lesotho's sovereignty. The King of Lesotho, Mosheshoe II, led a delegation to the United Nations where he addressed the Security Council, requesting the condemnation of Pretoria for its invasion of Lesotho.

The Progressives and the Jonathan Regime

While South Africa's destabilisation of Lesotho caused Lesotho political problems as well as inflicting substantial damage to its economy and death to its citizens, it has so far not succeeded in its main strategic objective, namely to force the Jonathan regime to abandon its independent foreign policy line. On the contrary, the invasion of Maseru by the South African army in December, 1982, rather than intimidate Jonathan, has made him more intransigent in his line and more defiant of South Africa's and Western pressures.

In early 1983, Jonathan defiantly embarked on an extended tour of Asian and East European socialist countries, including North Korea, China, the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, despite specific warnings from South Africa and the Western powers. Subsequently Korean, Chinese and Soviet embassies were opened in Maseru, despite Pretoria's protests. Following Mozambique's signing of the Nkomati Accord with Pretoria in March, 1984, many observers thought that the signature of such an agreement with Lesotho was a foregone conclusion. However, in a remarkable feat of open diplomacy, Jonathan politicised the whole question by taking it to public rallies, consulting with progressives inside the country and allies and friends in the outside world. Jonathan openly discussed with the people at rallies the implications for Lesotho of signing or not signing an Nkomati-type agreement with South Africa. Having got the views of those consulted, Jonathan decided to defy the Pretoria regime and not to sign an Nkomati-type pact with South Africa. The views of the progressive forces of Lesotho were made known to Jonathan before he took his decision.

The independent line of Jonathan's regime in regional and foreign policy, its brave resistance to South Africa's pressures, have won it the sympathy of progressives inside the country and throughout the world. For the progressive forces in Lesotho, the issue was not just a question of sympathy, but active support for the patriotic and independent regional foreign policy line of the Jonathan regime and assisting it to increase its capacity to resist the pressures and interventions of racist South Africa.

Communist Policy

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Lesotho (CPL) held in 1982 accordingly decided on a policy of "critical support" in relation to the Jonathan regime in Lesotho. This policy entailed a critique of shortcomings in Jonathan's internal policies and support for the patriotic and independent positions of its foreign policy. CPL policy with regard to the Jonathan regime

was arrived at as a result of an objective analysis of the correlation and realignment of political forces in Lesotho. All bourgeois opposition parties had moved to the right of the BNP and were prepared to collaborate with Pretoria, as they seemed to believe that the road to political power in Lesotho went via Pretoria. These parties were thus unsuitable as alternative governments in Lesotho. Lesotho communists felt that in the given political situation in Lesotho, the coming into power of any of the pro-South African opposition parties would be a national disaster, as that would turn independent Lesotho into a Bantustan manipulated by South Africa. The achievements of the past decades would be reversed and a severe blow would be dealt to the liberation movement in the region.

The BNP government had demonstrated the will to resist South Africa's pressures and it was the patriotic and internationalist duty of communists to support the ruling party's stand to resist South African imperialism, the traditional and immediate enemy of the Basotho people. This policy, it was felt, was not only in the national interest of defending and safeguarding Lesotho's sovereignty, but corresponded to the interests of the liberation movement in South Africa, led by the ANC, as well as the entire international struggle of the working class and of progressive mankind against imperialism, neo-colonialism and apartheid, for world peace and social progress.

The Seventh Special Congress of the CPL, held in November, 1984, reaffirmed the strategic line of the Sixth Congress of building a broad front of all patriotic forces of the Basotho people in opposition to South Africa's imperialist interventionism and for the defence of Lesotho as a sovereign and independent country. At the same time the Seventh Special Congress reaffirmed the determination of the party to maintain its character of independent Marxist-Leninist vanguard of the working people of Lesotho, campaigning for a socialist alternative in Lesotho's socio-political development.

Conclusion

At the time of writing this article Lesotho was preparing for general elections. The Parliament stood dissolved, the delimitation of constituencies was going ahead and the registration of voters was about to begin. The country was eagerly awaiting the announcement of the date of the elections. The ruling BNP machinery was already in full swing in the electioneering campaign. The opposition parties, while still not decided as to whether to boycott or contest elections, were busy trying to form an electoral pact against the ruling BNP on a right-wing platform.

The holding of general elections in Lesotho is a welcome development in the process of democratising Lesotho's political line. Progressive forces would have liked the main issues in the election campaign to be the burning questions of the socio-economic development of the country, questions relevant to the social wellbeing of the people. But it looks as though the right-wing forces will make "communism", by which they mean diplomatic relations with socialist countries, the main issue. The Lesotho electorate is politically mature enough not to be frightened by the communist bogey. It is going to demand to be told the economic and social platforms of all the aspirants to political power in Lesotho.

The Communist Party of Lesotho was outlawed in 1970 and so long as the statute book still prohibits free political activity for progressives in the country, the participation of communists in the electoral process in their own right is uncertain. However, the CPL's stand in the forthcoming general election will be to advance its strategic line of supporting all patriotic forces in opposition to South African imperialism and its agents in the interests of safeguarding the independence and sovereignty of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

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ON THE THRESHOLD OF REVOLUTION

How Should We Raise the Question of an Armed Insurrection?

By Comrade Mzala

It is becoming almost impossible during this period of our struggle to discuss the strategy and tactics of the South African revolution without coming up against the question of "The arming of the Masses" and taking a stand either for or against. We have now reached a decisive turning point. Not only are we faced with the challenges of the Nkomati and other similar Accords, but, in addition, the daily political events inside South Africa, the present militant protests by our people against the Botha Constitution and administration show very clearly that the mass movement has reached another peak. Schools have been closed down, students are boycotting lectures. In many areas the workers have joined in with their tremendous revolutionary zeal — such is the revolutionary instinct of the South African black working class. And, as is always the case during political protests in our country, large numbers of our people have already been shot dead by the trigger-happy police.

The contribution by Comrade Hugh Trevor on the roll of the masses in our liberation struggle (*The African Communist*, No. 97, Second Quarter, 1984) could therefore not have been more timely. The central theme of his thesis is that "the strategic objective of the present phase of the liberation struggle is the conquering of power by the mass of the people". At another

stage he becomes even more precise: "The need to conquer state power... presupposes a mass uprising, an armed insurrection, which is clearly the most offensive form of mass struggle."

How Significant Is the Question of Armed Insurrection in Our Strategy and Tactics?

We are faced with two possibilities here. It is a matter of either ... or. It is, either we proceed from a programme of the "Arming of the Masses" in preparation for the final seizure of state power and the creation of the revolutionary people's democracy; or we cease all work at attempting to organise armed struggle. If we shelve the question of armed insurrection from our strategy and tactics programme (an issue that needs to be settled in the clearest and most unambiguous manner in some kind of programme of action), we may as well proceed to support one or other of the local liberal parties at present trying to fit the black people into Botha's constitution. In that case we will have to stop all talk about "The People Shall Govern" and go for a negotiated peaceful settlement with the racist regime.

If, however, we admit that the general propositions in this regard as raised by Hugh Trevor are crucial strategic objectives for our movement, particularly at this time when imperialism is proposing that we negotiate the miscarriage of our revolution, then the urgent political and military task of our movement is the preparation of the masses for an armed uprising to be achieved through the combination of mass actions and armed operations.

A Real Victory

Lenin, the correctness of whose theoretical assertions were confirmed in actual practice by the success of the Russian revolution (and others subsequently), repeatedly stressed the need "to carry the revolution to a real and decisive victory". It is to this end that we must direct all our efforts, "and the achievement of that end will depend on the correctness of our slogan (on the one hand), and, on the other hand, on whether this slogan will be backed by the real and fighting strength of the masses of the workers". (See Lenin, *The Two Tactics*).

In order to achieve real people's power the African National Congress and the Communist Party demand the complete transfer of power to the people, represented in a democratic people's assembly; and for this goal our liberation movement strives for the immediate overthrow of racist autocracy, the dismantling of its instruments of authority and their replacement by revolutionary organs of government.

The opportunistic liberal democrats, who are the political representatives of the compromising section of the middle strata, do not demand the overthrow of the racist government. Instead they want to come to terms with it, they are prepared to make all manner of compromises in order to get into Botha's parliament, maintaining that their real aim is to ridicule such a parliament and make it inoperative. These opportunists do not aspire to the freedom expressed in our Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter can only be implemented when the racist state has been replaced by people's power, when there exists a revolutionary People's Assembly which shall have the authority to make a new constitution for South Africa. No revolutionary democrat or communist will shut his eyes to the question of the need to defend such a people's assembly by force of arms. There will be nothing even smelling of a people's government in South Africa if all that we imagine is some white-shirted and neck-tied parliamentary affair of revolutionary phrases about democracy and freedom, adopting all kinds of "Bills" and "Acts", while we have not built up a force of victorious armed people, a force that will be a direct consequence of armed insurrection, which would then be ready to defend such "Bills" and "Acts" adopted in "parliament".

If there are to be elections in South Africa, let them be held in a free and democratic atmosphere. The racist regime cannot guarantee such freedom and democracy. Only a revolutionary government, which is the organ of an insurrection, can desire this in all sincerity, and be capable of doing all that is necessary to achieve this — convening and guaranteeing the freedom and fairness of the elections and investing such a people's assembly with full authority and power to constitute. Approaching this question in a similar way in Russia, Lenin reasoned that whoever put it in his head to dispute this, would have to assert that it was possible for the tsarist government to be neutral during the elections, that such an oppressive government would see to it that the will of the people really found expression. "A liberal government," he argued, "which has come to terms with the tsar and which does not rely in full on the popular uprising cannot sincerely desire this". (*The Two Tactics*). So, the only slogan that is consistent with seizure of power, with the implementation of the Freedom Charter in South Africa, is one that calls for the arming of the masses in preparation for an armed uprising, one that categorically places the question of armed insurrection in our strategy and tactics programme.

From the standpoint of the class conscious workers, the question of armed insurrection assumes additional significance. The class conscious workers will participate in a democratic revolution without foregetting their ultimate

aim of building socialism. By coming into an alliance with the other classes of the oppressed nation, the working class does not necessarily trust that these allies will guarantee the continuation of the revolution from national democracy to socialism. Its attitude to the new democratic state is not only that it should implement the democratic programme, but that it should be an effective instrument to continue the revolution. To be able to continue this revolution the proletariat must not only play the leading role but must also exercise pressure both within the government and outside it — what Lenin called "pressure from below". Explaining this aspect of the Party's policy on the question of conquering power, he reminded us that "to be able to exercise this pressure from below, the proletariat must be armed — for in a revolutionary situation matters develop with exceptional rapidity . . ." The object of this armed pressure is to make sure that the working classes in the revolution do not bring the revolution to a halt.

The Period of Preparation

Hugh Trevor analysed the general importance of seizure of power by armed insurrection excellently. In so far as his main purpose is to combat an attitude or tendency that belittles this issue, Trevor is a hundred times right. But if the slogan of "Arming of the Masses" is to be assessed not merely as a theoretical postulate in some distant future, but instead as a concrete political demand on our agenda, then I am forced to disagree with Trevor in some respects. I submit that, if the question of "Arming the Masses" is to be more than a fashionable slogan it should be placed on a practical basis.

While also writing in favour of this slogan, Hugh Trevor nevertheless does not accord full significance to the great task, yet unfulfilled, of preparing the ground for such an armed insurrection as a condition for its victory. In reference to earlier theses on this question, he writes that "For Mzala and Migwe, 'arming of the masses' becomes identified with such activities as the setting up of combat units, fighting squads, amongst, for instance, the workers and students. This concept of arming the masses thus has a somewhat narrow military-technical tendency." And he continues: "However, we cannot fail to note that, even at the level of preparations for insurrection, this approach is quite inadequate since it fails to grasp the crucial importance of working class actions, above all, strikes, as well as peasant actions in preparation for an uprising."

The thesis Hugh Trevor is referring to (see article in *The African Communist,* No. 86 Third Quarter, 1981) stated that "the prospects of the strategy of the arming of the masses in South Africa should be assessed from the standpoint

of the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare leading to insurrection." This article also continues to make a general distinction between the two concepts: "Guerrilla warfare and armed insurrection are two different tactics or stages in the development of the struggle." The chief distinguishing feature between this approach and that of Hugh Trevor in assessing the arming of the masses in the context of South Africa is that Hugh Trevor, on the contrary, calls for its evaluation primarily and, most obviously, only from the angle of an armed insurrection. But is this approach not amounting to attempting to cross the river by simply gazing over it?

Writing about this kind of problem in his pamphlet 'South Africa: No Middle Road', Slovo correctly remarks:

> "It is necessary to separate two distinct problems. The first relates to what may broadly be called 'a revolutionary situation', in which revolution involving armed uprising is properly on the agenda. The second relates to the use of organised violence as part of a planned build-up towards a protracted people's war. A confusion of these two concepts has sometimes prevented a revolutionary movement from seeing the revolutionary possibilities of its own situation. Recent history has provided a number of examples of revolutionary parties which rejected military activity because they did not discriminate between the separate questions. In Algeria, for instance, the beginning of armed activity took the Algerian Communist Party by surprise; it regarded the launching of the national liberation war in November 1954 as premature, since the condition for an uprising as formulated by Lenin did not exist."

To belittle the importance of setting up combat units among the workers, peasants and youth of our country, would be to belittle the very practical requirements of preparation for an armed insurrection. "And to call for insurrection without previously preparing for it in military fashion," wrote Lenin, "without believing in it, would be unworthy playing at insurrection". On another occasion in 1906 he became even more specific:

> "We should increase tenfold our efforts to organise and arm fighting squads . . . we must prepare for insurrection also by means of fighting guerrilla operations, for it would be ridiculous to 'prepare' only by enrolling and registering new recruits . . . it is absolutely essential to train the cadres of the proletariat for offensive military operations . . ." (*Collected Works,* vol. 10, p.144).

Clearly, at present we must concentrate our attention not on the organisation of insurrection but on the arming of the masses in actual combat and in preparation for the inevitably coming armed insurrection. By referring to the call for the creation of combat units, fighting squads, and so on as a "somewhat narrow military-technical tendency", Hugh Trevor is, in my view, shirking the task of analysing the military tactics and technique of arming the masses in preparation for insurrection, a question to which Marx,

Engels and Lenin attached great importance. (See Frederick Engels, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany* and his Introduction to Karl Marx's *The Class Struggles in France — Selected Works,* vol. 1, Moscow 1955, pp. 130-34).

Yes, the "working class is the only class which can lead the struggle for power" (Trevor), but to prepare this working class for the task of insurrection, it mustt acquire the fighting experience and military training through the only feasible combat tactics in South Africa, the tactics of a militarily inferior force against a modern army — guerrilla tactics. We shall recall from the great days of the 1976 revolt that these guerrilla operations were missing because we had not prepared for them. Such actions of guerrilla warfare are meant to disorganise the enemy's forces and thus pave the way for open mass action. Guerrilla operations and mass revolt are not mutually exlusive; one is the hammer and the other the anvil.

What does Comrade Trevor say about this stage of preparation for armed insurrection in order to avoid a "somewhat narrow military-technical tendency"? He views this task only in the following way: "Preparation of the working class for this role demands its education, above all, in actual struggle. It means combining economic and political demands in the context of working class actions. It means strike action on both the industrial and political fronts."

But is that all? Can we then call this combination of economic and political demands by workers a preparation for an armed insurrection? This education "in actual struggle" without any form of military preparation and organisation can as well be preparation for a simple political demonstration by workers, but not an armed uprising!

The Moscow Uprising

Let us take a quick look at the Moscow uprising of 1905. This uprising was, first of all, not a mere political demonstration but, instead, street fighting by the crowds of workers against the tsarist troops. The revolutionary parties in Moscow (particularly the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies) resolved to "strive to transform the political demonstration into an uprising." A Joint Council of Volunteer Fighting Squads was formed as the operational general staff to co-ordinate workers' military actions against the troops. Lenin graphically recorded these events this way:

> "The unorganised street crowds, quite spontaneously and hesitatingly, set up the first barricades.

> ". . . artillery fire is opened on the barricades and the crowds in the streets. Barricades are set up more deliberately, and no longer in isolated cases, but on a really mass scale. The whole population is in the streets; all the main centres of the city are covered by a network of barricades. For several days the volunteer fighting units wage a stubborn guerrilla battle against the troops, which exhausts the troops and compels Dubasov (the Governor-General of Moscow at the time — M.) to beg for reinforcements . . ." (*Collected Works,* vol. 11, p. 172).

What was happening here was more than a combination of economic and political demands by the workers. The workers' movement had reached a point of transition from a general political strike to a higher stage, the stage of an armed uprising. What was then necessary was a fearless and relentless armed fight; and such an armed fight by workers requires certain military tactics depending on the available military techniques. During the Moscow days Lenin warned that "it would be folly to contend against artillery in crowds and defend barricades with revolvers". There was necessary a new kind of barricade tactics, which the Russian workers were already employing on a mass scale in Moscow. "These tactics", said Lenin, "are tactics of guerrilla warfare. The organisation required for such tactics is that of mobile and exceedingly small units, units of ten, three or even two persons." And he continued:

> "We often meet Social Democrats (communists) now who scoff whenever units of five or three are mentioned. But scoffing is only a cheap way of ignoring the new question of tactics and organisation raised by street fighting under the conditions imposed by modern military technique. Study carefully the story of the Moscow uprising, gentlemen, and you will understand what connection exists between 'units of five' and the question of 'new barricade tactics' ".

There is no possibility of reaching the stage of armed insurrection in South Africa without developing a tenacious guerrilla warfare on a mass worker and peasant scale, and this approach is further dictated to us by the implication of the colonial status of the black people who, unlike their white countrymen, are mostly excluded from all military establishments, and never had the chance to undergo the usual national military service as is the case with whites. To imagine an armed uprising in South Africa by simply importing a European model that ignores the colonial experience of our country would be a negation of Marxism-Leninism.

The Art of Insurrection

Karl Marx persistently called for the treatment of insurrection as an art, counselling the working class that once they have decided to engage in it (not just playing about with it), and given the favourable conditions for its probable success, they should always take the offensive against the enemy,

never giving him breathing time and taking advantage of his confusion. These were the lessons of the 1848 revolutions in Germany as well as the 1871 Paris Commune (see how Marx brilliantly documented the latter events in *The Civil War in France*).

Engels, who always had a special interest in the military aspect of the workers' struggle, wrote between August 1851 and September 1852:

> "Insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them . . . Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority; unless you bring strong odds against them, you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small, but daily; keep up the moral ascendancy which the first successful rising has given you; rally those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you." (Engels, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany* in Marx and Engels, Selected Works in 3 volumes, vol. 1, Moscow, 1976, p. 377).

Lenin also wrote that "insurrection must rely upon that turning point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest". (*Collected Works,* vol. 26, pp. 22-23).

Insurrection is an armed uprising of the whole people, and it is organically connected with the revolutionary upsurge of the people during a revolutionary situation in the country, when the people refuse to be ruled in the old way and the bourgeoisie can no longer rule in the old way, when there exists a nationwide crisis. When all these conditions exist, then, and only then, we must treat insurrection as an art of revolution; failure to do that would amount to rejecting the science of society as set out in Marxism-Leninism.

Proceeding from this Marxist-Leninist premise, let us then pose three questions regarding the appraisal of the timeliness of an armed insurrection in South Africa: Firstly, do we have the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution, the working class? Secondly, is there a country-wide revolutionary upsurge at the present time? Thirdly, is there vacillation on any serious political scale among our enemies?

The Wavering of the Troops

Serious attention should also be placed on another (often forgotten) condition for the success of insurrection — the wavering of the troops and their winning over (or a significant majority of them) to the side of the revolution. Preparation for armed insurrection, over and above the task of "combining economic and political demands in industrial action", means the struggle to win over the enemy army or at least to neutralise it. This was the other lesson of the 1905 Moscow uprising about which Lenin said:

> "The Moscow uprising was precisely an example of the desperate frantic struggle for the troops that takes place between the reaction and the revolution".

And he complained as well as warned:

> ". . . we failed to utilise the forces at our disposal for such an active, bold, resourceful and aggressive fight for the wavering troops as that which the government waged and won. But we shall prove to be miserable pedants if we forget that at a time of uprising there must also be a physical struggle for the troops"

Again, in South Africa, the racial barrier created by colonialism between the oppressed and the oppressors makes this task a difficult one but certainly not an impossible one. We may not have the advantages of Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, etc. in this regard, but we certainly do have our own kind of advantage, a non-racial policy as well as membership and leadership that comprises both black and white people of our country. The increasing incorporation of certain sections of the black people into the South African Defence Force and the creation of Bantustan armies add both objective liabilities as well as subjective assets to the conduct of our armed struggle.

Partial Insurrections

The political situation in South Africa has created conditions where the masses of our people openly and boldly manifest political hatred for minority racist-colonial rule. They defiantly organise on a countrywide scale against the apartheid government — they certainly no longer want to be ruled in the old way. Our recent history since the 1976 events shows us, among other things, that the masses are gradually but surely developing the mass actions spontaneously towards an uprising (despite their being armed only with stones, bottles and sticks). Deficiencies in our organisational strength do not refute the significance of this development. The trend of mass actions particularly since the beginning of this decade shows consistent development from peaceful strikes to violent running battles against the police. Barricades are often erected in the townships in the course of battles against the enemy. What should this mean to us?

It means people should be made conscious of the necessity for the overthrow of the regime (including its local representatives in the Bantustans, townships and villages) and its substitution by a people's government and local people's communes. These mass strikes, if left to the spontaneous course of events, may be corrupted by agreements betweeen their leaders and the government (as the petty-bourgeois leadership is always eager to do). It is necessary to spread among the people, based on their experiences, a concrete idea of insurrection and the likely course of revolutionary development. They should start to see their revolts as elementary insurrections.

The political and military leadership must not miss a single chance for taking the offensive against the enemy, spreading the uprising to the neighbouring districts and creating semi-liberated regions. This is what the current events are teaching us and also teaching the people.

Organs of People's Power

Comrade Hugh Trevor regards the establishment of organs of people's power at the weak points of the enemy's structure as being essentially of a defensive kind. He writes:

"Although such a development seems almost inevitable in such areas as the townships and indeed in the Bantustans, it should be clear that, however important such a development will be, it will be taking place essentially, not within the framework of insurrection, but, at least in the initial stages, will rather be a part of guerrilla-type struggle."

He obviously does not deny that such organs of people's power will begin to develop even before the final armed insurrection, as the most obvious development of people's war of a guerrilla type. But Comrade Trevor does not see this concept as being "offensive" since it does not proceed from armed insurrection — he argues that "the concept of people's power — in South African conditions — thus implies the necessity for mass insurrection which is, in any case, a necessary tactical assumption from the strategic objective of conquest of state power".

The creation of people's organs of self-government in the South African revolution will not take place at a single stroke of armed insurrection; they will be called into being not by proclamation but by the requirements of the combination of mass actions (partial insurrections) and armed guerrilla struggle; they will be organs of that struggle. In turn, these organs, coming about only at the specific times of the development of these struggles, will further develop the struggle to final insurrection.

Hugh Trevor's declarations seem to be confusing the revolutionary people's government proper with the various local revolutionary organs of authority that will arise in the process of the struggle. Comrade Trevor refers to Lenin's call for the establishment of a provisional revolutionary government in a pamphlet he wrote in mid-July, 1906, under the title: *The Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat.* With regard to "the question of the armed uprising of the whole people" Lenin says in this pamphlet:

> "As regards the preceding forms of struggle, the 'last word' of the mass popular movement in Russia is a general strike and an uprising. The last quarter of 1905 could not but leave ineradicable traces in the mind and mood of the proletariat, the peasantry, the politically conscious sections of the army, and the democratic sections of the various professional associations of intellectuals. It is quite natural, therefore, that after the dissolution of the Duma, the first thought to enter the minds of the broad mass of those capable of fighting was: the general strike. No one seemed to entertain any doubt that the reply to the dissolution of the Duma *must* inevitably be an all-Russia strike." (*Collected Works,* vol. 11, pp. 118-119).

This call for an armed uprising was dictated by the whole situation. Learning from the experiences of October-December 1905, the revolutionary organisations came to the conclusion that everyone's attention must be drawn to the necessity of a general and simultaneous action; the ill-advised idea of a demonstration against the dissolution of the Duma suggested by the St. Petersburg Mensheviks met with the most determined opposition of the workers. Judging from the available information Lenin pointed out that:

"Organising peaceful demonstrations would merely play into the hands of the government, which had 'tasted blood' with great satisfaction in December. Peaceful demonstrations would exhaust the proletariat to no purpose and would merely provide exercise for the police and soldiers in seizing and shooting unarmed people". (p. 119)

That was why "the establishment of a democratic republic in Russia is possible only as a result of a victorious popular insurrection whose organ will be a provisional revolutionary government".

In South Africa our struggle is bound to develop local revolutionary organs of authority as the embryonic forms of our future government. The time will come when the people will take their destiny into their own hands, even if, at first, in a small part of the country. Such organs of revolutionary authority will be instruments of struggle for freedom and democracy and the expression of the will of the people in all local matters affecting their life. There is nothing inherently "defensive" about these institutions as long as they do not become static and bogged down with administrative rather than

liberation tasks. These organs are bound to collapse unless they are backed by a revolutionary army and co-ordinated on a countrywide scale into national revolutionary power of the armed masses led by our vanguard organisations — the ANC and the SACP.

And there will be nothing "regional instead of class-based" about these organs of self-government as long as they are not led by outright reactionaries. Led by the working class and the peasantry, the struggles in the townships and Bantustans will be bound to develop simultaneously with those in the urban centres (at the industrial points) and white farming areas. The precise arena for the setting up of the revolutionary organs of self-government will be dictated by the actual circumstances and not by the revolutionary pens of the theoreticians. Of course, from the standpoint of an offensive strategy of mass actions and combat activity, the cities and white farms are the primary target areas, but the people will choose themselves where they will set up their organs of self-rule. And the national democratic nature of our revolution will obviously influence the class composition of such local organs of self-rule, which means they will absorb the revolutionary elements of the petty-bourgeoisie. Form should not be mistaken for substance.

§§§

MIKHAIL GORBACHOV—NEW



SECRETARY OF THE CPSU

Mikhail Sergevich Gorbachov was elected general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union following the death of President Konstantin Chernenko last March. Mikhail Gorbachov was born on March 2, 1931, in the village of Privolnoye, Krasnogvardeisky District, Stavropol Territory, in a peasant family.

After the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45, at the age of 15 he began to work as a machine operator at a machine and tractor station. He joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1952. He studied law at Moscow University, graduating in 1955. In 1967 he qualified as an expert in the economy of field-crop production at the Stavropol Agricultural Institute.

From 1955 onwards Mikhail Gorbachov worked full-time first in the Young Communist League and later in the CPSU. By April 1970 he had risen to the position of first secretary of the Stavropol Territorial Party Committee, and the following year became a member of the CPSU Central Committee. He was a delegate to the 22nd, 24th, 25th and 26th Party congresses. In 1978 he was elected secretary of the Central Committee, in 1979 an alternate member of the Political Bureau and in October 1980 a full member of the Political Bureau.

For his services to the Communist Party and the Soviet State Mikhail Gorbachov has been awarded three orders of Lenin, orders of the October Revolution, the Red Banner of Labour, Badge of Honour and other medals.

In his acceptance speech on March 11, Mikhail Gorbachov pledged to do everything in his power to serve the Party, the Soviet people and the great Leninist cause.

"Everything in the name of man, for the benefit of man" — this would be his guiding principle, he said. The CPSU would do everything possible to speed up the country's social and economic development, to improve the living standards of the people, to secure world peace.

"The CPSU is an international Party by its very nature. People abroad who share our views may rest assured: in the struggle for peace and social progress the Party of Lenin will, as always, closely co-operate with fraternal Communist, workers' and revolutionary-democratic parties, and will champion the unity and active co-operation of all revolutionary forces."

CUBA'S ROLE IN AFRICA

An Interview with Fidel Castro

On January 30 this year Fidel Castro, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Councils of State and of Ministers, was interviewed by three correspondents of the *Washington Post* — Karen de Young, Jimmie L. Hoagland and Leonard Downie.

The interview ranged over the whole sphere of world politics, but concentrated on US relations with Cuba and other countries of Latin America. In the course of the discussions, Fidel Castro was questioned about Cuba's involvement in Angola and Ethiopia. His answers are reproduced verbatim below, as published in *Granma*.

KAREN DE YOUNG. — Can I ask you a question about Angola?

Do you see any chance, if there is an agreement between South Africa and Angola facilitated by the United States leading to the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola, of this perhaps reducing tension between the United States and Cuba, which would in turn reduce tension in other areas?

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — I think that wherever solutions are obtained this helps diminish tension everywhere. I think an isolated agreement in one place not only helps relations between the countries of the area but exerts a positive influence on the whole international scene. Well, were there to be an agreement there, an agreement acceptable to Angolans — the Angolans are the ones who must decide with real guarantees for Angolan security, that is possible. We feel those guarantees should include: implementation of Resolution 435, the independence of Namibia, a halt to aid for UNITA — that is, the South African FDN — with verification, of course, by means of an international agreement signed by the various sides at the Security Council. In a period of time it would be possible to withdraw —

the Angolans have said three years — the Southern Troops Grouping, which constitutes the bulk of the forces stationed there, leaving others in the central and northern parts of the country whose withdrawal would be discussed and agreed upon by Cubans and Angolans, depending on the prevailing climate of security. That is the idea.

The South Africans have been organizing subversive groups and using them in Angola for eight years now. Angola is a very big country with extensive communications, large bridges, and those groups can do a lot of damage. The Angolans would need time to replace our troops with their forces; they can't do it all of a sudden.

They are working in good faith to find a solution. The countries of southern Africa, of Black Africa, have a very firm position on this. They oppose linking Resolution 435 to the withdrawal of Cuban troops.

I will tell you the truth, the Front Line states of Black Africa in general are not happy with the idea of the withdrawal of Cuban troops, they feel very threatened by South Africa. That is a fact and you can go and speak to them; the countries of Black Africa are the ones best able to explain their positions. We know that all the independent countries of southern Africa are not happy with the withdrawal idea, because the Cuban forces are the only outside forces that have helped them against South Africa. They feel that when those forces leave they might be at the mercy of South Africa, because South Africa has been very aggressive and they are very distrustful.

There is something else: even though the South African forces pull back to their border, they can be at the Angolan border in 24 hours, while we are 10,000 kilometres away. These are the realities and they totally distrust South Africa. Neither Angola nor the other countries of Black Africa are happy at the prospect.

Counter-Revolution

I don't want to speak for them, you can talk to them; you can ask Nyerere for his views, Zambia and Zimbabwe for their views, the Congo and Mozambique. They of course want an overall solution, with peace for Mozambique and Angola, with guarantees; but they are very distrustful of South Africa, because it has been very aggressive and created counter-revolutionary bands in Angola and Mozambique.

In Mozambique there was peace, there was no civil war, there were no problems. The South Africans organized former Portuguese colonialists, soldiers who served with Rhodesia's Ian Smith and blacks who had been with the Portuguese. They organized and trained them and they supplied

weapons, planes and helicopters. The war in Mozambique was created by South Africa.

South Africa also sponsors subversion in the small nation of Lesotho.

None of these countries feels protected against South African activity, not one of them. They also have strong feelings of rejection for apartheid.

All African states, all nations of Black Africa, states ruled by both leftist and rightist movements are united by their hatred of apartheid, their revulsion of apartheid. They are not resigned to it; there is not one that isn't against apartheid. We have supported those who have fought apartheid, and fought the aggressors.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — I understand that right now the Cuban troops in the south are stationed along a static defence line, for protection in the event of South African attack.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — Of course, they are in a strategic line, because the South Africans have certain advantages near the border, near their air and logistical bases; that is the area they move in. Our forces defend a strategic line further back to cope with any large-scale South African attack. Their positions and defence and counter-attack mission are determined by rigorous military and technical considerations.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — Do they participate in the fighting against UNITA?

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — No, they do not participate directly in the fighting against UNITA. That is a task for the Angolan units, although we give them troop combat advice and support with technical means if required. We have trained many of their command cadres, selected from among the best fighters.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — In the event of withdrawal, would it always be to the centre and north?

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — No, those forces would be brought back to Cuba.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — But after the withdrawal of the troops from the south would there still be 10,000 Cuban soldiers north of the 13th parallel.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — Yes, about 10,000 because the problem is that figures have been given on the number of troops in the south, but not on those in the centre or north, only approximate ones. They are reserves in the event of a complicated situation arising. If an agreement is reached, we will strictly fulfil our obligations. There are 20,000 in the Southern Troops Grouping, and they are the bulk of the Cuban forces.

Angola has many strategic points. It is a very large country, nearly a million and a half square kilometres. It is 14 times the size of Cuba, with thousands of kilometres of roads, large rivers, bridges, many vital strategic points, hydroelectric power plants, etc.

Our forces occupy a number of strategic communications links and airports.

Cabinda is a very important spot for Angola. Everybody wanted to take Cabinda, and it is vital for Angola's economy. In 1975, Zaire attacked Cabinda to take over the oil. Gulf Oil is working there and I think they are satisfied. They have worked and turned out their oil, they have their business and nobody has obstructed them, and it has been well defended. We are not trying to defend the interests of Gulf Oil, we are defending the interests of Angola and that oil benefits both Angola and Gulf. We defend the interests of Angola and indirectly those of Gulf. Those forces are not covered by the negotiations taking place.

The positions occupied by the forces in the south can't be vacated in a few weeks, because the Angolan army must take over, and it needs time and cadres, new units and means, because it must also fight the UNITA mercenary bands. They need some time, as we see it, not less than three years to be able to take on this task; that is reasonable, perfectly reasonable. If they did otherwise, they would face some very serious problems. They need more time to replace the other troops, since it is a huge country with a series of strategic spots: airports, bridges, industries and hydroelectric plants. We are currently defending many of those points.

They have a strong army, which is gaining in experience, cadres and fighting spirit. They have increased their forces and, in time, in the future they will be able to defend their country against foreign attack while also opposing subversion and fighting UNITA.

UNITA exists because of foreign aid. UNITA struck a deal with South Africa. For Black Africa this is treason, a deal with the South African racists is treason. We are the ones who benefit most from a settlement. I tell you frankly, we benefit most; we have been there for nine years, more than 200,000 Cubans have been to Angola. This is a real effort and we have no economic interest in Angola at all. But if a solution acceptable to Angola does not materialize, we will firmly continue with our support to that country as long as necessary.

It has often been reported, perhaps even by The Washington Post, that the Angolans pay for the Cuban troops stationed there. I want to say that no life of any Cuban has its price. It cannot be paid for with 1000 or 100 billion dollars.

Our military cooperation has never been paid for in any country of the world where we have given it, never! Neither in Angola or anywhere else. Some countries with the means have paid for civilian cooperation: doctors, engineers. In the great majority of countries, that cooperation is also free.

Often the United States does not understand how we can do this, all that it costs, if Cuba doesn't have the hard currency. That doesn't cost us hard currency. We pay salary here in Cuba for all those rendering internationalist cooperation: civilians, military, officers, all have their salary paid here. Many are from the reserves, workers from the reserve who are in military units. Their salary is paid in Cuba. The country where they go provides housing and food and we pay their salary. We have thousands of people working in those conditions now, without involving hard currency expenditure. Nor does their return mean unemployment, because we are paying them here. Nor does it mean a cut in spending because they would do other work in Cuba. It doesn't create unemployment or any other problems.

We can do this for a basic reason which is not economic: we have the people to do it with. That is the secret, and that is what the Revolution has created. That is what I was telling you about. I talked about the 2,000 teachers, when we had 2,000 teachers in Nicaragua it is because we could do it; but we could send 30,000 or 100,000 because they have been educated with that idea. These are motivations and moral values that the Revolution has sown in them all. In this, we have an overwhelming advantage over all nations of Latin America and the Third World. I don't think any other country with a relatively small population has such top quality human potential.

Sometimes the country we are helping is very poor and we also pay part of the expenses of our personnel. But the general rule is: housing and food is provided by the country and we pay the salaries. We send eight doctors to one apartment; it proves easier for the host nation to have eight doctors in small lodgings. If they seek a doctor in Europe, they must provide a home for the family, pay his vacations and spend about 40,000 or 50,000 dollars a year. Meanwhile, eight of our doctors live in one apartment, they are provided for and are not paid for their work. Those are the bases of our cooperation in all countries.

A few countries with the means to do so pay for civilian cooperation, a few countries, for the doctors, teachers, engineers, construction workers. There are two or three countries, which I won't go into. About 90 percent of the countries are very poor and we don't charge for our help.

We also have 22,000 scholarship students in Cuba from more than 80 countries; many doctors, engineers and technicians from these countries have been trained in Cuba. We are sincerely concerned about the situation in

Third World nations. It is not simply diplomatic and political activity, it is a reality which we feel and have experienced and which we raise at all international forums: at the UN, before the socialist countries, in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, everywhere. We have become very aware of the social, sanitary, educational and other problems. It is not a case of seeking relations; although of course there has been a quest for relations because, in response to the efforts to isolate us, we tried to extend our relations. I truly say we are deeply concerned about the tragedy of the Third World. I personally involved myself in these problems of cooperation, doctors, teachers, cooperation in agriculture, etc.

I think a major effort of international cooperation and large-scale investment is required in Africa if we are to come up with a strategic solution to its food problems and prevent a natural holocaust there. And I will tell you the truth: rather than spend money on space weapons and star wars, I think the world and even God, for those who are believers, would be much more grateful if the money were used to prevent the disaster which is threatening Africa and hundreds of millions of people, since the desert is moving south or north at increasing speed. Television programmes broadcast images of widespread famine all over the world and people find out what is happening.

In social terms, the situation in Africa is different from that of Latin America: tens of millions, hundreds of millions of people live in hamlets as they did hundreds or thousands of years ago. They live there with their rudimentary farming. They are very stoic and resigned. They are killed by disease, hunger and drought, but there is no explosion, it is not like in Latin America. In Latin America, there are many millions of blue and white collar workers, intermediate sectors, intellectuals, educated people. What I am trying to say is that the class structure in Latin America is different from that of Africa. You can't say Africa is exploding in social terms; you can say Africa is dying. Latin America is exploding, it has a different social structure.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — Regarding Angola, why do you think the United States is playing a positive role?

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — Well, I say it would be positive, if results were to be obtained; I would even venture to say it is positive that they try to seek political solutions to regional problems. If they are truly seeking a solution, I think several factors are involved: there is antipathy for South Africa all over the world, there is a lot of antipathy for apartheid even in the United States.

In the United States, there is a current opposed to apartheid and cooperation with South Africa. I think the United States is interested in its

relations with Black Africa, and it really doesn't want to appear as being linked to the policy of apartheid. I think the United States has an obsessive desire to get Cuban troops out of Angola, perhaps because of their special mentality. It seems that the only country in the world that can have troops everywhere is the United States, and the fact that a small country such as Cuba has some troops in a few places would seem to violate a tradition, established norms. It would seem to be truly inconceivable. I really don't know why they have magnified it such a lot, but it could be summed up as appearing to them as irreverence and disrespect. We really didn't send those forces there to offend or irritate the United States in all truth, we would rather send doctors and teachers than soldiers. We only hope that one day none of these countries will require military cooperation.

I think it is forgotten that we have had links with the MPLA since they started their war of independence, for almost 20 years. When the MPLA was on the brink of winning independence, those other groups were created. UNITA was really set up by the Portuguese as a counter organization to the MPLA, and UNITA joined forces with South Africa to crush the MPLA. We didn't send troops initially; at the request of the Angolan patriots, we sent instructors and weapons for the MPLA. They were in the south, in various places, a few dozen instructors.

Rescue Operation

When the invasion, the frontal South African attack took place, allied to UNITA, in their advance they attacked the military training school and the Cubans with their students resisted the South African advance. The first Cubans were killed there. Afterwards, the aggressors continued their advance towards Luanda, and Zaire attacked from the north. As the South Africans rapidly advanced from the south, we sent the first unit by air, a battalion of special troops, which occupied positions south of Luanda, along various strategic routes. In those days, bridges had to be blown up over the Queve River as they approached Luanda. That unit helped hold back the South Africans. A complex situation had been created and it had to be solved; we weren't going to leave that unit there alone. That was what decided the dispatch of other units.

That was how events unfurled. We had never thought of sending troops, but neither had we thought of the likelihood of such a situation, a blatant South African attack in which Cubans would be killed and the lives of other instructors jeopardized, along with Angolan independence itself. We had to send the unit, and then the others. Then we sent all that were necessary to get them out.

They were about 1000 kilometres inside Angola and we put the pressure on; when they realized that the battle was for real, they started to pull back towards the Namibia border and at the end held talks with our officers on the border. Then there was a period of calm, a certain period of calm and then they started up again. They started their raids on Angola, on the pretext of the struggle against SWAPO.

We know the South Africans very well, their psychology; we don't underestimate them at all. They have spent a lot of money on weapons in the last ten years. But neither do we overestimate them. We are aware of their problems, their limitations, their psychology and their way of doing things.

I think the South Africans right now are obstructing U.S. efforts in the area. The greatest problems faced by the United States are not with Cuba or Angola, they are with South Africa. That is the truth as we see it.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — Can I ask you about a couple of details which normally you would not discuss. But since there are things of which I think you can be proud, in the context in which we have been talking, allow me to ask them.

How many Cuban lives have been lost in Angola since 1975?

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — We have had our casualties but have not given out any information, we didn't feel it was convenient to do so. Our policy has been not to give casualty information; that has been the policy right from the start. The enemy must not have that information. We will know how to honour in a fitting manner those killed in revolutionary struggles, here and everywhere.

JIMMIE L. HOAGLAND. — The situation in Ethiopia seems to have stabilized very rapidly, allowing for a significant withdrawal of your troops. Is that so?

COMMANDER IN CHIEF FIDEL CASTRO. — I think the situation in Ethiopia is different. Ethiopia was always independent. It had many more cadres than Angola and many more skilled personnel, a population of 35 million people, a strong army, a soldier that is strong and has great endurance, who can walk 100 kilometres over 24 hours, fight all day. They are champions in long-distance running, they have tremendous resistance, they have a tradition of organization and struggle, and they currently have a large, really large army.

Angola is a country which became independent after four centuries of colonial rule, without a tradition of government and organization. They have had to create everything in a few years, in a large country but with a small population. South Africa is a stronger and more powerful enemy

with industrial development and modern weapons. The situations are different.

The role of our forces in Angola is important given the conditions there. They have subversion from within and a threat at the border. Our forces play an important role and are greatly needed for a period of time, even after an agreement is reached. They can't do without our forces all of a sudden.

The Ethiopian Revolution

In Ethiopia our forces are smaller, have always been smaller, more modest, but well armed units with good fire power. Aid was given to Ethiopia at a difficult time; it was needed because they had been attacked by 12 mechanized brigades, tanks and artillery, while at the same time there were problems in the north with the separatists. It was a difficult moment for them when they needed to consolidate their forces. Somalia clearly calculated that those difficult moments were the time to attack. We did all we could to avert that war, because we had relations with Somalia, we even visited Somalia, Ethiopia and Aden. We met in Aden: Mengistu, Siad Barre, the president of South Yemen and myself, and we spent many hours talking well into one night. Siad Barre was intransigent: he was reclaiming the Ogaden. We said to him: well, I trust you won't think of going to war — because Siad Barre claimed to be a socialist and revolutionary. A revolution had triumphed in Ethiopia; actually the revolution in Ethiopia was much more real and profound than in Somalia, because there were even slaves in Ethiopia and a terrible social situation. It was a genuine revolution.

Mengistu is a person with great qualities, in my opinion exceptional, one of the most responsible, capable and courageous leaders in the Third World.

Well, at the meeting, Siad Barre promised he would never attack Ethiopia and the war started a few months later. I think he made a mistake in military terms; for political reasons he started bit by bit, one brigade here and another there, little by little rather than all of a sudden. If he had thrown all his forces into battle, the situation would have been more difficult; he advanced in various directions with a certain dispersal of forces; but in the end he created a difficult situation. At the time, the Ethiopian government was new, it was being organized. That was when we gave the aid; we actually acted as attorneys for the Ethiopians, we talked to a lot of people about Ethiopia and their just struggle, we sent weapons, a few thousand weapons, instructors; but there was a critical situation. I think our aid at that time was very important and they greatly appreciate it.

Since then the Ethiopian army has developed considerably; our presence there is more or less symbolic alongside the Ethiopians, it is not the same as in Angola. By agreement with the Ethiopians, our personnel there was reduced to certain limits and it all depends on them. I think they appreciate our aid and view it as an element of solidarity; and in Ethiopia as well we can't decide unilaterally that we will pull out the troops. We can't do that anywhere.

If you cooperate with a country you can't just decide: look, I'm leaving because it suits me, because I know it would please some people, or it might please the United States. We can't work in that way. In themselves, those units stationed there are a force with combat effectiveness and capability; but vis-a-vis Ethiopia and its military power, it is symbolic.

The Ethiopians are the ones who must decide, they know our views. As long as they feel the presence is necessary, we will maintain it. When they feel it is not necessary we will withdraw.....

There's something else that came to my mind, and that's Angola. I really believe that we are the ones to benefit the most from an agreement there. I said the same thing to the legislators, and to make things even clearer, I also told them despite the fact that we were the ones who stood to benefit the most, that we still wouldn't be in favour of a solution that would involve risking the independence and integrity of Angola. That's a very important idea and I made it clear to the legislators. Of course, we would abide by any decision the Angolans take, but we would not agree with a solution that would jeopardize Angola's independence and integrity. That was the idea. In other words, I think that we work in perfect coordination and in complete accord with each other and that's basic.

I said to the legislators that if the agreement were not reached in practice, we would meet our commitment with Angola, even if it meant remaining for another five, ten, 15 or 20 years. The idea wouldn't have been complete unless I explained it to them and that's what I did. Despite the fact that that's what we're interested in, we are not in a hurry and we prefer the agreement, a reasonable agreement. Still, we will not agree with a decision that may imply a sacrifice for Angola, even though it may mean remaining there for another five, ten, 15 or 20 years. Negotiations must be carried out from a strong, serious position. And I said that if that strong serious position did not exist, if someone felt like withdrawing, it was better to withdraw and not negotiate. That's what I explained to the legislators, the whole idea. That we were the ones who stood to benefit the most, that we had no economic interest in that country, that we were only fulfilling our duty to that country.

Africa Notes and Comment by Du Bois

SUDAN: THE END OF A DICTATORSHIP

Almost sixteen years after Gaafar Mohamed Nimeiri came to power on the back of popular unrest the saviour-turned-dictator of the Sudan has been deposed by another army coup. On this occasion too, the armed forces intervened during widespread civil unrest which took the form of a general political strike by workers, students and the professional strata.

The immediate cause of the revolt which spilled out into the streets of the capital, Khartoum, was the lifting of subsidies on basic necessities such as bread. The demand for bread was soon transformed into an organised strike against the entire system of want, poverty, bloodshed and neo-colonial dependence which has characterised the dictatorial, pro-imperialist regime. The popular slogans of the general strike became: "We want Nimeiri's head" and "Down with the USA".

On April 6th the army, which has held a decisive ground in Sudanese politics, moved in with the simple announcement that after lengthy meetings and consideration of the events it had "decided to support the people". Up to

that point soldiers had acted with policemen, Nimeiri's secret service, courts and judiciary to stem the seething tide of anger of the working masses over almost two weeks of demonstrations and strikes. A reported 2,600 people were arrested and 850 summarily tried and sentenced to terms of imprisonment, fines and flogging. Hundreds were deported from the capital as Nimeiri's personal adviser on Cultural Affairs warned the strikers: "We will hunt them like rabbits. We will strike them like scorpions".

In the event, the forces of coercion reckoned without the sting in the scorpion's tail. At its height, just before the army takeover, the strike movement encompassed the widest and most diverse sections of the social and class forces in the capital. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, academics and students took to the streets. Their ranks were decisively swollen by the workers and their trade unions. In the end, large sections of civil service, judges, magistrates, journalists and the staff of the diplomatic missions had joined the strike in the demand for the restoration of democracy in the Sudan.

The army was neither the initiator nor the decisive force in the overthrow of the hated tyranny. The working people, through their courage, determination and organised force, were.

Although the twelve days that shook the foundation of the Nimeiri regime contain all the drama associated with mass action and a change in the power relations of a country, the signals of a decaying and dying regime were already accumulating over many years. The root causes are to be found in a series of factors and forces which meshed together to bring about the ultimate denouement.

The Drift to one-man Rule

When the armed forces seized power in May 1969 with Nimeiri, then a colonel, at its head, there was great expectation that the Sudan would abandon the steady advance towards anti-popular, feudal and neo-colonial dependence which marked the rule of successive governments since independence in 1956. Indeed, the Communist Party of Sudan came out in "critical support" of the soldiers, having waged a relentless struggle against the old order together with the democratic trade union movement, workers, youth, women and professional organisations. For a brief period, until July 1971 this was precisely the direction in which the Sudan moved under the direction of the Revolutionary Council of the Armed Forces and the Council of Ministers which had leading members of the Party serving on it. The banks and other major financial institutions were nationalised; import and export

trade was brought under state control, which was also introduced over strategic economic resources; companies involved in vital production were wholly or partially nationalised. More importantly for the country's political stability, the costly war in the southern regions was brought to an end and a policy of regional autonomy was instituted under the direction of Joseph Garang, a member of the Sudanese Party's central committee and Minister for Southern Affairs. The country's foreign policy moved closer to the Non-Aligned Movement, the socialist countries and anti-imperialism.

Yet the Communist Party was not the only political force on the national stage. Alarmed by the radical transformation that was taking shape the bourgeois parties began plotting ceaselessly to reverse the process. They found support in none other than Nimeiri himself. The progress of popular power became increasingly hampered and the political situation began to deteriorate. By the time patriotic forces within the army struck to remove Nimeiri from power in July 1971 the ruling clique had turned their backs on every element of revolutionary advance. Tragically, the July 1971 revolution had no time to consolidate its positions, especially among the working masses and their Party and trade unions. Three days after the seizure of power Nimeiri was installed into office once more through the actions of sections of the army still loyal to him, internal reaction and foreign intrigue. The democratic movement was put down in a bloody reprisal. Scores of communists, trade unionists and progressives were murdered. Among the martyred patriots were Joseph Garang, Abdul Khalid Mahgoub, the Party's General Secretary, and Shafieh Ahmed Sheikh, General Secretary of the Sudanese Workers' Union.

Nimeiri had turned the Sudan's future development decisively away from the non-capitalist path. The way was cleared for the entrenchment of private enterprise, the rule of monopolies and millionaires and the increasing penetration of foreign finance-capital in Sudan's economic life. The United States immediately stepped in with an 18 million dollar credit to Sudanese wheat importers; the IMF granted a 40 million dollar loan; Britain arranged a 25 million pound "aid" package; the Saudi regime, supporting the shift to anti-popular, anti-communist measures, offered a loan of 200 million dollars, and began pouring in aid in various ventures with the state and private enterprises.[1] The material base of an advance to capitalism was being consolidated and fuelled primarily from foreign investments, loans and financing. At the same time the regime took steps to denationalise and between 1972 and 1973 most of the nationalised private enterprises had been returned to their previous owners.

Politically, the regime banned the Communist Party and the democratic trade unions, substituting a state controlled workers' movement. In order to minimise the dominance of any one section of the bourgeois parties and religious groups Nimeiri also banned all political parties. Henceforth these parties and groups were only allowed a say in government through the Sudanese Socialist Union. As we shall see later, this move laid the basis for tensions and, ultimately, conflict between the regime and the bourgeois parties, because it deprived these parties of effective control of state power. To safeguard the continuation of the new order the dictatorship came to rely increasingly on coercion and terror. The army's allegiance was won through concessions, increased pay and privileges. As a further measure Nimeiri created a 50,000-strong State Security Force, accountable solely to him. The civil service, judiciary, police and regional authorities were purged and manned at top levels by his personal appointees.

What had begun as a great exercise in the development of popular democracy and social emancipation in May 1969 turned into its opposite: an anti-people's dictatorship.

The class basis of the Nimeiri Dictatorship

Tyrants seldom rule in their own behalf exclusively. It would be erroneous to ascribe Nimeiri's assumption of absolute power solely to his megalomaniac disposition and "personal ambition", though these are important elements. Political power, even within a dictatorship, is an expression of class rule. We can be certain that state power in the post-July 1971 period has not been exercised in the interests of the working people. Yet by the time of the April 1985 coup Nimeiri had effectively antagonised the traditional bourgeois parties in the Sudan. The answer to the question — in whose interests did the Nimeiri regime act? — can be found in the nature of the capitalist class in the Sudan.

The development of the capitalist mode of production invariably results in the formation of "fractions" with different and divergent interests which at times may conflict with each other. In the developing capitalist countries this division has manifested itself in the emergence of two main trends: a national bourgeoisie and a comprador bourgeoisie. Briefly, the policies pursued by the former in the economic sphere are to develop internal capitalist relations to the fullest possible extent, to develop the internal production process and expropriate the fruits of exploitation of the working masses for its own advancement. Whilst this class is not wholly opposed to foreign capital, it strives to limit its sphere of penetration. Objectively, its interests are wholly in

conflict with those of foreign monopoly capital, since this constitutes a threat to its own development as well as an encroachment into its profit potential.

The comprador bourgeoisie on the other hand is primarily active in the sphere of commerce (rather than production); is completely dependent on foreign capital interests for the source of its income (often entering into partnerships to exploit local opportunities), and relies on the state to pursue policies which would encourage foreign investment. This class also has close links with the bureaucrats in the state apparatus who themselves benefit from the operation of foreign capital through the system of contracts, tenders and resource allocations.

In the Sudan the development of capital, especially during the post-independence period, brought with it similar divisions within the capitalist class.[2] The period up to the May 1969 revolution marked the dominance of the national bourgeoisie in the political and economic spheres. Their class interests were represented by the Umma, National Unionist and People's Democratic Party. From July 1971 the Nimeiri regime began shifting its "development" strategy to foreign capital. This came primarily from the rich oil states like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and international monopoly capital.[3] With this came also an increasing reliance on the finance institutions of imperialism such as the IMF and the international lending banks.

This crucial shift in state policy led to the growth of the comprador bourgeoisie and a parasitic state bureaucracy who came to dominate the state apparatus. Together with international imperialist interests these classes benefited directly from the operations of the new economic policy and had a vested interest in maintaining the dictatorship in power. This is not to say that national capital ceased to play any role in the entrenchment of capital or that it reaped no benefits. In becoming the agent primarily of foreign capital and its class allies in the Sudan Nimeiri shifted the centre of power away from the national bourgeoisie and frustrated its expansion and development. It fuelled this class's anti-Nimeiri positions, not overnight, but with the working out of the new power relations. Not only had the Nimeiri regime alienated itself from the mass of working people but it antagonised the very influential national bourgeoisie. In the long run this was to prove fatal when taken in conjunction with the economic crisis which was becoming a chronic feature of the regime and the failure of the Southern Policy.

The Economic Crisis

The regime's strategy for maintaining power, apart from coercion, rested on the calculation that the marriage of comprador, imperialist and Arab capital

would generate sufficient benefits to enrich the coffers of this alliance as well as containing the demand of the working masses in economic terms. In fact, throughout this period the general economic condition of the mass of the people deteriorated. Taxes increased; unemployment rose steadily; the cost of living increased as a result of inflation and successive devaluations of the Sudanese pound (12 since 1978); real wages declined, and pressure from the IMF tended to erode the real value of subsidies on basic foodstuff and was completely withdrawn by the time of the present events. All this, whilst wealth in the hands of the imperialist monopolies and the local beneficiaries of the capitalist path of development increased.

The underlying trend in economic performance, despite the huge inputs of foreign capital and loans, has been a decline, especially in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. The disastrous performance of agriculture which accounted for 90% of foreign earnings and 40% of the gross domestic product has had the effect of accelerating poverty among the agricultural workers and has brought the country face to face with famine on a large scale.

Whilst the annual growth rate for export not only declined but went into reverse during the period 1970-1980, imports increased at an annual rate of 3.5%. The results of this can be seen in the dramatic rise in the balance of payments deficit which grew steadily from 30.5 million to 310.6 million Sudanese pounds in the period 1974-1982.[4] This meant further borrowing from the international money markets and the IMF and by the time of the April 6 coup Sudan's national debt amounted to some 9 billion dollars. Wholly in keeping with the economic decline, mismanagement and chronic crisis was the picture of Nimeiri, whilst in the USA at the time of the recent coup, begging for more funds from the US Treasury to the tune of 100 million dollars and an "aid" and loan package of another 114 million dollars.[5] The latest IMF-inspired measure to cut the bread, sugar and other basic foods subsidy sparked off the latent anger of the masses. They took to the streets. This spontaneous act of revolt soon turned into a highly organised political general strike. It led to the downfall of Nimeiri. Such has been the consequence of Sudan's capitalist road.

The Southern Crisis

What has aggravated the regime's crisis has been the resurgence of armed struggle in the southern provinces.

The revolutionary government of May 1969 adopted virtually the entire programme of the Communist Party of Sudan and other progressive forces in regard to the southern Sudanese peoples who had waged an unrelenting war

against successive post-colonial regimes. Sections of the southern guerilla leadership, the Anyanya, demanded secession from the North and the establishment of an independent national state. By the time of independence of the Sudan from British colonialism in 1956 the north-south divide was already a reality, although this was seen primarily in ethnic-religious terms — the Arab-Muslim North and the African-Christian-Animist South — rather than as an historically evolved relation of unequal development. The Communist Party Programme correctly pointed out that real unity between North and South had to evolve on the basis of regional autonomy for the South within a unitary Sudanese state, but only in conditions of an advance through socialist-oriented and anti-imperialist policies. Joseph Garang, then Minister of State for Southern Affairs, spelled this out more clearly in 1970:

> "The building of a broad socialist oriented movement in the South, forming part of the revolutionary structure in the North and capable of assuming the reins of power in that region and rebuffing imperialist penetration and infiltration from the rear is an essential pre-requisite for the practical and healthy application of regional autonomy."

This programme was accepted by the Southern leadership and later enshrined in the Addis Ababa Accord of 1972. In practice, however, the Nimeiri regime in succeeding years began eroding the principle of regional autonomy for the South. The main problems of political powerlessness and economic underdevelopment persisted. Discontent with the dictatorship boiled over into armed rebellion as a result of three main developments. Firstly, the South came to be seen as a source of enormous wealth with the discovery of huge deposits of oil. Income was estimated at around 200 million dollars annually — sufficient to fuel the country's economic growth in the future. However, the regime scarcely bothered to discuss the exploration, development and, more importantly, the distribution of oil revenues with the representatives of the South through the regional governments.

Secondly, a measure closely associated with the oil discovery and its implications — the Southern Sudan government was summarily abolished and the region carved up into three administrative zones. This was seen widely as an attempt to "divide and rule" and an abandonment of the Addis Ababa Accord. Thirdly, the country's constitution was changed to transform the Sudan into an Islamic state without consulting the people, least of all the Southern peoples, the majority of whom are non-Muslims. This move has been interpreted as the imposition of cultural colonialism on the Southern peoples.

The result has been a resurgence of guerilla war against the dictatorship. The main movement is headed by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement

(SPLM) with its armed wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Colonel John Garang, the leader of this movement, has made it clear that the aims of the movement are full equality, democracy and rights for the southern peoples in a unitary Sudanese state; more specifically: abolition of Islamic law (Sharia) in the South, restoration of the 1972 Addis Ababa Accord, more equitable distribution of the national resources of the country, fuller levels of political representation in central, regional and local government, further representation in the diplomatic missions, universities and research councils.

Since the coup various announcements have been made by the new military council and the civil political authority to meet with the leaders of the Southern Movement. There is general agreement that no government of national unity can ignore the presence and real participation of the southern leadership.

Sudan's Foreign Policy

The foreign policy pursued by Nimeiri's regime reflected the policy of neo-colonial dependence on imperialism that has characterised the internal situation. Since 1971 the Sudan had become a strategic outpost of imperialism, particularly US imperialism. In return for large handouts of American "aid", estimated at around 200 million dollars annually, Sudan's independence has been more or less completely eroded. Its positions on African affairs were at variance with the progressive policies of the OAU in regard to the Camp David Agreement (Nimeiri was the first to support Sadat's treachery in this sell-out of the Palestinian and Arab People's aspirations), the situation in Chad and the secessionist movements in Ethiopia (which Nimeiri supported). The Sudan abandoned its non-aligned principles and, in its avid embrace of US imperialism, was in conflict with the Non-Aligned Movement.

In strategic-military terms the Sudan had become the essential bridgehead for US imperialist manoeuvres and counter-revolutionary designs against the progressive Arab states and movements in the Middle East and against such governments in the Eastern and Central regions of the African continent. To this end a number of American military bases have been established on Sudanese soil.[6] Under the guiding hand of the USA, Sudan and Egypt entered into a pact of cooperation which included the military intervention of either of these states if the situation was regarded as threatening their stability. The Sudan became the focal point of aid to the Hissein Habre counter-revolutionary movement against the legitimate

political authority in Chad, the GUNT. Both the Eritrean and Tigre movements have their headquarters in Khartoum through which American and reactionary Arab funds were channelled against socialist Ethiopia. Sudanese, Egyptian and US forces forming the Rapid Deployment Force held regular "exercises" in joint command and operations. The USA military establishment has been working hard towards a form of military association between the Sudan and its other ally on the eastern coast — Somalia. The incursions of US imperialism into the African theatre became a far greater reality with the complete subservience of the Nimeiri regime to the dictates of the US political-military circles. All in all the policy of the Nimeiri regime had come to pose a real threat to Africa's independence and the security of African progressive states.

The National Democratic Movement

Of all the socio-political groups and parties the Communist Party of Sudan (SCP), even after its tragic losses after the July 1971 revolution, has been the most implacable foe of the Nimeiri dictatorship and the role of international and local finance-capital. It remained the most consistent fighter for the restoration of full democracy in the Sudan and for the rights of the toiling masses.

The guiding principle of the SCP, and one that determined its strategic orientation, has been that of the National Democratic Revolution as a necessary step towards the advance to socialism. Accordingly, the Party worked ceaselessly, as part of the anti-Nimeiri struggle, to create a broad front of all social and class forces opposed to the regime and international imperialism. This programme and strategy correspond even today to the realities of the Sudan. This was indeed the approach spelled out by the SCP during and after the May 1969 revolution:

> "The National Democratic Front, therefore, constitutes the organisation and political alliance of the working class, peasantry, revolutionary intellectuals, national bourgeoisie, revolutionary officers and soldiers — an alliance based on a national democratic programme expressing the common interest and commitment of these classes. In order that the alliance should stand on a firm basis, the *independence* of its various components *must* be safeguarded."(7)

We see in this approach the important distinction the SCP draws between fractions of the capitalist class and hence the real possibility of bringing a section of it into the democratic, anti-imperialist struggle. The agents of foreign capital, the comprador bourgeoisie, and sections of the parasitic bureaucracy opposed to the alliance and tied hand and mouth to the dictatorship are explicitly excluded from this alliance. The Communist

Party's approach therefore sees a positive role being played by the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois classes at this juncture of the Sudanese revolution because of the conflict of interests between these classes and foreign monopoly capital.

This approach has led the SCP to strive for maximum unity as the basis for the overthrow of the dictatorship and the future progress of Sudan. In its February 1985 Bulletin the SCP informed us that the Party had held a number of meetings with different political parties and that agreement had been reached on the formation of a united opposition front and the formulation of a charter. The precise contents of the latter had however not been decided. Important in these efforts has been the position in regard to the guerilla movement in the South.

Today, the dictatorship has been overthrown and the SCP, together with a number of other parties, has been invited by the newly-created Military Council to help form an interim government of national unity as a step towards full civilian rule.

Given this new situation, what are the prospects for an advance along the lines of a state of national democracy? The fulfilment of this stage of the Sudanese revolution requires a number of important developments. Clearly, the emergent state has to be national, democratic and progressive, a state which will uphold the economic interests of all those classes and social forces opposed to foreign monopoly capital: in other words, an anti-imperialist state. It will be democratic, in that it will represent the political will of all these social forces with the leading role played by representatives of the workers and peasants who constitute the majority (more than 90%) of the people. It will guarantee the basic democratic rights of the working people. Only the effective participation and leadership of the working masses at every level of government and decision-making can guarantee a future which is anti-imperialist and can serve as an advance to socialism. The extent to which this can become a reality depends on a number of factors, not least the correlation of class forces at the present juncture, the alliances that emerge and the direction of march. A decisive component of this process is the class political organisation of the working people, the SCP, and the organisations of the working class such as the trade unions and the mass democratic organisations of women, youth and students.

Conclusion

The Sudanese experience has important lessons for the African revolution. Once more it has demonstrated that no tyranny and grouping of reactionary

forces can resist the organised strength of the people. Iran demonstrated this earlier. So did Nicaragua. The Sudan confirms this. The rule of tyrants and despots can be proscribed by the resolute action of a united, organised mass movement.

The Sudan also confirms the two tendencies that exist within the armed forces, who when they seize power act accordingly: a revolutionary tendency which bases itself on the will and interests of the masses, and a reactionary tendency which allies itself with international imperialism and reactionary local forces against the people. Last, but not least, the Sudan experience once more underlines the fact that neo-colonial dependency and the capitalist path of development inevitably lead to anti-popular measures, lack of democracy and basic freedoms, economic hardships for the mass of the working people, the loss of real independence and subservience to the interests of imperialism.

The only genuine choice facing Africa is between capitalism and socialism. The former is manifestly failing to answer the needs of our continent. Socialism remains the only option available to solve the long and short-term problems we face.

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SENEGAL MARXISTS CHART A NEW COURSE

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One of the main characteristics of the present political situation in Africa seems to us to be a definite growth in the influence of Marxism-Leninism over large sections of the population of the continent. Of course, such a process does not take place in a linear manner, with the same rhythm and extent everywhere. On the contrary, it takes various forms and unequal dimensions according to the different countries and their concrete socio-historic situations. One of its most striking manifestations has been the existence and growth of states which, in the aftermath of their victory over colonialism, have taken the road of radical socio-political transformation under the banner of a socialist orientation. Thus there are already tens of millions of men and women in Angola, Benin, Congo, Ethiopia, Guiné Bissau and Mozambique who have become involved in such a process. Elsewhere, where neo-colonialism continues to oppress peoples, the progress of Marxism-Leninism is shown by the appearance in increasing numbers of political organisations which owe to it their progressive growth, the revival of their activity and their increasing importance among the patriotic and

democratic forces against imperialism. It is now difficult to find a single country in our continent in which one or more of such groups do not exist.

This varied process is the reflection of the crisis of imperialism and neo-colonialism, an indication of the radicalisation of the national liberation movement and the growing maturity of the political consciousness of the mass of the people.

In this context, one can only consider it an event of wide significance that the first Marxist-Leninist party in tropical Africa has met in Congress to take account, critically and self-critically, of a quarter of a century of activity, to measure its successes and failures in the building of a true revolutionary vanguard, and finally to say how it intends to achieve power and what it will do with that power. Undoubtedly, the lessons drawn from our experience, modest though they may be, and the perspectives which we have obtained for our present and future struggle, will interest not only Senegalese Marxists, but also the whole revolutionary movement of the continent. It is in the strength of this conviction and conscious of the heavy responsibility which lies upon us that we have made a point of getting to the heart of things, without concealing any inadequacy, any mistake or any fault which might hinder our progress on the road to victory. We have good reason to believe that against this background, the second legal Congress of our Party, held at Dakar from 28 to 30 September, 1984, did not fail to come up to expectation.

The second legal Congress of the P.I.T. Senegal brought together nearly one thousand delegates duly mandated by basic Party structures, together with observers. Its importance was enhanced by the presence of representatives of various Senegalese political movements, trade union personalities of our country and also by large delegations from fraternal parties — the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and other countries. It was greeted by dozens of messages from every corner of the world.

Several months of discussions and collective reflection took place within the Party. Thousands of copies of preparatory documents were sent to all the political parties of our country to seek their suggestions and criticisms (which we undertook to publish in our press). Hundreds of meetings were held in various forms throughout the country and in all the national languages to discuss our analyses and positions. Never before in Senegal has any political party proceeded in such a democratic manner to have its activity, its orientation and its programme judged by public opinion. We had to do this and we have not regretted it. At a time when every encounter with the "socialist" party in power tends to degenerate into heated and even bloody

exchanges, we believe that we have given fresh proof of the superiority of the rules and principles of Leninism over the empty boasts of the bourgeoisie wanting to give lessons in "democracy".

Our procedure has also enabled us to profit considerably from the views of our compatriots so as to improve the quality of our analysis. This is why we think that the conclusions at which we have arrived at our Congress will make a really important contribution to the success of the revolutionary struggle in Senegal. Moreover, it was in order to allow our Party to play its full part in this struggle that we were obliged to re-examine the whole of our activity without complacency. The conclusion which we have drawn from this re-examination is that, while we have achievements and successes of which we can legitimately be proud, we have also made mistakes and been guilty of faults which have greatly retarded our progress.

Our Achievements

Let us first see what we can count by way of achievements. The historic manifesto, published in 1957 at the time of the foundation of the African Independence Party, and the Programme adopted in 1962 were the first documents of their kind in West Africa. They constituted in their time an important contribution by Senegalese Marxists to the creative application of the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin under the conditions of our continent.

The historical importance of the foundation of the African Independence Party resides for Senegalese communists in the fact that it gave the working masses of our country a precious instrument with which to guide their national and social liberation struggle. Under the aegis of Marxism-Leninism, by inscribing on the same banner the ideals of national independence and of socialism, Senegalese communists have written glorious pages in the contemporary history of our country. At a time when certain men who claim to lead the patriotic struggle try to present us as "foreign agents", the following fact needs to be underlined: it was we, the communists, who were the first to call upon our people to shake off the yoke of French colonialism. At a time when the slogan "Independence now" was considered utopian by many who today present themselves as champions of nationalism, it was our Party which called upon our people to mobilise and organise for the reconquest of their freedom and dignity. This is an objective fact which places us indisputably in the line of defenders of the glorious African tradition of struggle for freedom and dignity. This is the secret of the immense prestige which has become attached to the name of our Party.

We have also succeeded, in spite of the winds and tides of neo-colonialist repression, directed primarily against us, in ensuring the continuity of communist activity in our country — a feature now recognised as irreversibly forming part of the political realities of Senegal. It is for these reasons among others that we can say that our experience has not been altogether negative, even though we are still far from having led our people to victory.

The fact remains that from the beginning, our action has suffered from serious theoretical and practical shortcomings which, under the often dramatic circumstances of our struggle, have cost us dear. The excessive generality and schematicism of our initial analysis led us to lose sight of certain concrete facts of importance to our struggle. The re-reading of the Manifesto of 1957 and the Programme of 1962 is instructive. The essential character of that period is not correctly reflected in these documents. Although we have never ceased to emphasise the importance of the working class, we have had an abstract and bookish view of it. The concrete realities of the worker's life in Senegal escaped us. "Workerist" jargon served us as a psychological compensation for a lack of real links with the working class.

We have also been very slow to take into consideration the essentially agrarian character of our country. This led to insufficient attention being paid to the role of the peasantry in the anti-imperialist struggle and to the lack of a proper agrarian policy in the Programme of the Party.

On the political level, our actions and positions, seen with hindsight, seem to have been guided too much by simple agitational ideas. Petty bourgeois activism and a taste for the spectacular thus took priority over a methodical and persevering effort to build a credible alternative, capable of mobilising the masses in the long term. The building of firm organisational bases for the Party and the strengthening of its ideology by means of consistent work on the education and training of militants were neglected.

It is equally clear that in our early days, intoxicated by our success in mobilising for national independence, the Party had no clear idea of the difficulties which lay ahead and the magnitude of the task we had set ourselves. On the contrary, as if to reassure itself, the Party tended to underestimate the capacity for manoeuvre of the new ruling class, the strength of bourgeois influence over the masses and the influence of traditional structures on the thought and behaviour of the people. All this led to mistakes and inadequacies and an inability to escape from petty-bourgeois impatience in the working out of political tactics.

Many of the mistakes and shortcomings mentioned above can be largely explained by the particular social and cultural conditions of our struggle.

They were also due, however, to the theoretical and political immaturity of the leadership at the time and its lack of experience of tasks which our Party was the first to undertake in this part of the continent. These shortcomings were undoubtedly connected with the social composition of the Party which was dominated by petty bourgeois intellectuals and specifically by the university intelligentsia, who were all the more impatient to obtain power because they imagined that they were naturally entitled to it in the post-independence situation.

These mistakes and shortcomings were made worse as we went along by the violation of Leninist rules for the functioning of the Party, by the cult of the personality which grew up around the former General Secretary, Majmouth Diop, by his individualistic style of leadership and finally by the revisionist ideas which he added, in the course of successive redrafts, to the Programme of 1962.

The consequences were not long in becoming apparent. Not only did these mistakes do great harm to the ideological unity of the Party, but they also led to actions which were all the more mistaken because they in no way corresponded to the real situation. When as a result of such actions, the consequences of which had not been correctly foreseen, repression descended on the Party, it was only with great difficulty and with heavy losses that the Party was able to come through.

Armed Struggle

It was precisely in this context of an accumulation of mistakes, political errors and violations of democratic procedures in decision-making, that the Party embarked, at the end of 1963, upon a policy of armed struggle. This was done on the basis of hasty conclusions drawn from some outbreaks of politico-religious violence, together with the disappointments resulting from the fraudulent elections of December 1963. This militarist and adventurist deviation took no account of the forces available to the Party or of the degree of experience and political consciousness of the masses. It was all the more blameworthy in that it was never properly discussed. The 24th plenary session of the Central Committee, which had met a short time before, was not informed of it. On the contrary, that session took a number of constructive and realistic decisions on important points which were inconsistent with the militaristic lurch forward in which the Party was suddenly involved. The bankruptcy of this suicidal policy was made apparent by a qualitative leap in the degree of repression brought to bear against us. This plunged the Party into a crisis the results of which had to be endured for a long time.

Rebuilding the Party

The task of rebuilding the Party, begun at the National Conference of 1967 and continued systematically on the organisational, theoretical and political levels by the second Congress of the P.A.I. Senegal held in 1972, and by the founding Congress of the P.I.T. Senegal held at Dakar in 1981, has been methodically accomplished. It is now being carried forward in a new context, a context in which the necessities of the struggle require that the Party should be at one and the same time *a vanguard party and a mass party*. It must be a great party of initiative and of struggle in the service of the working class and the popular masses of Senegal. It is in the light of these necessities that the second legal Congress of the P.I.T. Senegal has underlined in a very distinctive way the need for our Party to extend and consolidate its links with the masses, to strengthen its proletarian base, and to offer the working class the opportunity to fulfil its historic mission and play the most active part in social and political change.

The political, ideological and organisational strengthening of the Party and the success of our policy of unity of patriotic forces enable us to seek the best conditions for success in the struggle against the neo-colonial regime. At what stage of this struggle do we now find ourselves? What objectives can we aim at? What forces can we mobilise to achieve these objectives? How do we intend to achieve power and to keep it? These are the important questions which our Congress set out to answer, basing itself on an objective analysis of the situation of our country.

Senegal is dominated in its most vital aspects by foreign capital, associated with a small indigenous class of bourgeois bureaucrats and parasites. The neo-colonialist and capitalist policies followed by the "socialist" government are the essential cause of the growing pauperisation of large masses of the people. These same policies have produced the result that, more than a quarter of a century after its independence, the country has not even set out on the road of economic and social development which would benefit the majority of its people.

Conducted for the benefit of imperialism and the indigenous minority which controls the apparatus of the neo-colonial state, this policy has ruined the country, aggravated social inequality, gravely affected civil liberties, endangered the peace and security of our poeple, created regional disequilibrium and stirred up ethnic problems which put our territorial integrity in issue, and undermined the foundations of our national cohesion. This situation has divided the country into two camps with irreconcilable interests: on the one hand the camp of thos who organise exploitation and

profit from it, and on the other hand that of the victims of exploitation whose interest lies in putting an end to it.

It is on the basis of the situation briefly described above that our Congress has defined the present stage of our struggle. This is the stage of the national democratic revolution whose content in our country possesses two dimensions — anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism. This double characterisation is not something which we have decreed out of a wish to make history conform to our own desires. It has its basis in the thesis originally put forward by Lenin and confirmed by the modern national liberation movement both in Africa and elsewhere, according to which national liberatory revolutions increasingly tend to go beyond the simple challenging of foreign domination and to attack the very basis of the system of exploitation of man by man. This tendency not only reflects the spirit of the age — that of worldwide transition from capitalism to socialism — but is also a consequence of the change in the world balance of power. It is this favourable historical context which enables a country like ours to skip the period of the maturity of capitalism, thanks above all to the support of the world socialist system.

But in arriving at this double characterisation of "anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist", we did not base ourselves only on the opinions of Lenin. We looked to see whether that opinion was confirmed by the concrete situation of our country. We noted the fact that the road of capitalist development taken by our country has led to increased dependence, economic backwardness and increased inequality among our people. To this we add another observed fact: where a socialist choice has been made (provided that it has not been prejudiced by subjective errors of one kind or another) the people have benefitted from achievements far exceeding those of even developed capitalist countries.

National Democratic Revolution

What exactly does an "anti-capitalist" policy mean in a country like Senegal where, in spite of the existence of a modern capitalist sector which in the final analysis determines the direction taken by the economy, there is nevertheless a predominance of small producers and traders constituting a petty bourgeois system of relations? It means that on the social and economic level, our national democratic revolution has a double historic mission. Firstly, it must settle the matters left in suspense by the immaturity of capitalist development; in particular this means destroying the pre-capitalist relations of production and social relations which act as a brake on the emergence of

modern forces of production. Secondly, it must create and accumulate economic, social, political and cultural forces for the consolidation of our national independence and then for the gradual transition towards socialism.

We are concerned with a particularly complex process in which we can already anticipate certain difficulties arising out of the concrete situation in Senegal. These difficulties mainly flow from the fairly profound involvement of our economy in the world capitalist market with which it has links which cannot simply be broken from one day to the next. Difficulties also flow from the heavy liabilities of our colonial inheritance and from the serious effects upon the behaviour patterns of the masses of the patriarchal ideology surviving from the past. The aggravation of international tension and the increasing cost of the arms race for the socialist countries objectively limit the extent to which they are able to help us. Our people will therefore have to follow the way pointed out to us by the socialist countries: the way of labour, effort and sacrifice. It is only in this way that we can benefit from the aid and support of the socialist system.

Our Party believes that a task of this nature and this breadth cannot be undertaken by one class alone. No one class at present existing in Senegal has the necessary strength to carry it out. In any case the objectives of the national democratic revolution as we see them are in the interests of several classes and social levels. Therefore they must work together to pursue their common interests. This is why our Party envisages the unity of patriotic and democratic forces in a broad alliance of different classes in a *Democratic Front* of struggle against neo-colonialist and imperialist power.

In the light of our analysis the classes and social groups involved in such an alliance are:

- the industrial working class;
- the peasantry (which is already in the process of differentiation to which we must pay attention, while nevertheless working in the present stage of our struggle to mobilise the peasantry as a whole);
- the middle class;
- the nationalist bourgeoisie (meaning that part of the Senegalese bourgeoisie whose existence and development are threatened by the domination of foreign monopoly capital).

Our Party's strategy and tactics are now aimed at doing all we can to create such a Front. It will become the foundation of a democratic state, based on the joint power of the classes and groups who have allied themselves against imperialism.

Who Will Lead?

A question often asked about the Democratic Front is, who will lead it? This is an important question to which our Party must give a clear answer. The question of the leadership of the Front does not depend on any preordained order of importance. Leadership is always taken in practice by the class best prepared for it by its level of political consciousness, its degree of organisation, the ideological influence which it has upon the other classes concerned, and in short by the effective contribution which it can make towards victory. In the present circumstances of Senegal, in spite of the genuine dynamism of the working class, it is not that class which can at present take on the role of political and ideological guide in the anti-imperialist struggle. This role is taken by the middle class, in particular by the intellectual salaried workers, because of their level of political awareness, the way in which their education enables them to understand exploitation, and the heavy blows which their material conditions of life have recently sustained. Probably Senegal is not an exception in developing countries in this respect, In any case, so far as our Party is concerned, we have decided that in view of the important role being played by this class in the anti-imperialist struggle, we must adopt an attitude towards it which will increase our influence over it and bring it closer to working class ideology and revolutionary ideas.

At the same time we remain convinced that the Front must eventually be led by the working class solidly allied to the peasantry and in particular the poor peasantry. The Party has therefore given itself the following tasks:

— to redouble our effort to educate and organise the working class, to enhance its capacity for political leadership and raise its class consciousness;

— to intensify our activity among the peasantry so as to mobilise it and win it over to the side of the working class;

— to strengthen our Party by enlarging its popular base and consolidating organisationally the influence which it has achieved in the country.

All these tasks tend towards the achievement of a single objective — to build around the industrial working class a solid bloc of the urban and rural toiling masses, capable of exerting a decisive influence on the course of events.

All the analyses which we have made illuminate our strategy for obtaining power and eventually governing our country. It is a democratic strategy, by which we shall at all times rely upon the masses, advance at the pace dictated by their level of consciousness and what they are really in a position to achieve. As Lenin once said, we must be one step, but only one step ahead.

We must therefore always be in the heart of the social and political battles which are being fought. We must organise, mobilise, explain, discuss and try

to convince. We must shake off the narrowness inherited from a long period of clandestine activity and turn resolutely towards the suffering and struggling masses, knowing at all times what they think, what they want and what they can do. Such an approach eliminates the false dilemma between "armed struggle" and "peaceful struggle". The real task is to educate and organise the masses, to put them in a position to act and at all times to resort to the methods which seem most effective to them. It was after taking the full measure of the demands of such a strategy that our Party decided that cardboard militants and drawing room revolutionaries no longer have a place in our ranks.

At the end of the Second Congress, we look to the future with hope. Our Party has come a long way. We regard the harsh battles through which we have passed as a baptism of fire which has left us more resolute and determined than ever before. To enable our Party to be the true vanguard of Senegalese society, the recognised and accepted guide of all those Senegalese who work, suffer and struggle, we have embarked on a great building operation. We will carry the work forward with patience and consistency, benefitting from the rich experience which we have acquired.

(Translated from French by *The African Communist.*)

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THE FIGHT FOR WORLD PEACE AIDS OUR FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

By Ahmed Azad

In 1984 the two-pronged racist strategy of the carrot and the sjambok was intensified. The carrot was reflected by the events leading up to and including the farcical tri-racial "parliamentary elections", and in the agreements signed with Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland. But our bitter experience demonstrates that the white mask of peace is a deception. Pretoria continues to commit acts of aggression against the frontline states and to sustain the counter-revolutionary bandits of MNR and UNITA. Colonialist South Africa persists in its illegal occupation of Namibia, killing, maiming, torturing and arresting thousands of Namibians in the vain hope of undermining the strength and influence of our comrades-in-arms SWAPO.

Internally, the instruments of repression have been sharpened.Many areas of our country were occupied by the military and police forces of the regime in the last quarter of 1984 and thousands were arrested, wounded or killed. This year (1985) major trials involving ANC activists on charges of treason and terrorism are taking place. A charge of high treason has been levelled against the leaders of the UDF and the Indian Congresses, and a charge of subversion against some of the organisers of the successful two-day general strike. For the oppressed, Botha's "peace" means only the baton and the bullet.

The heroic resistance which has been displayed by the oppressed can be encapsulated in the slogan "Reject the Carrot! Defy the Sjambok!" Neither

the racist regime nor South African monopoly capital which sustains and nourishes it could withstand the revolutionary onslaught of our people led by the ANC and its allies without the enormous financial, political, military and diplomatic support of the imperialist powers. The pedestal of shame is occupied by the Reagan administration which has done everything in its power to bolster and improve the destructive capacity of the Pretoria regime. Let us remember that Pretoria scuttled the talks with SWAPO in Geneva, following Reagan's election in 1980. Later, on instructions from Washington, the racist regime insisted on linking the presence of the Cuban international forces in Angola with the independence of Namibia. Even though this linkage has been rejected by SWAPO, Angola and all independent Africa, the Reagan and Botha regimes are still insisting on it. Majority opinion in the world, however, agrees that the presence of the Cuban internationalist forces in Angola is a matter for the two governments concerned. The most important line of action is to compel the occupation forces fully to comply with resolution 435 of the UN Security Council with respect to the independence of Namibia.

The threat posed by the regime to the existence of the majority of the people of South Africa, the national independence of many African countries and indeed to world peace, is a logical outcome of the militarisation of the economic, political and ideological life of the country.

The Uses of Militarism

Long ago Lenin pointed out that the ruling class uses militarism — which is an outgrowth of capitalism — externally as a military force and internally as an instrument to suppress the economic and political movements of the working class. From the experience of the imperialist world, including South Africa, we note that war preparations contain two fundamental properties — the strengthening of the material and technical instruments of aggression and the manipulation of mass consciousness.

In South Africa the latter aspect takes the form of stimulating chauvinism and racism amongst the white population and inculcating amongst the oppressed masses a feeling of hopelessness in the face of an all-powerful aggressive force. Both local and foreign monopolies involved in the manufacture and export of weapons of death and destruction reap astronomical profits from an accelerated arms race, while the national income is redistributed in favour of the rich.

Militarism in South Africa should be seen as a complex system of

economic, political, ideological and military measures undertaken by an aggressive monopoly capitalist state to suppress by all means possible the internal revolt and to conduct imperialist-type wars against foreign countries. The aim is to defend and if possible consolidate the capitalist system and to generate higher profits for monopoly capital. The deep economic crisis which has developed in South Africa as a result of the accelerated preparations for war and the illegal occupation of Namibia has the most adverse effects primarily on the black masses.

Over the past decade the military-industrial complex in South Africa has become more and more powerful. One of the bastions of this complex is the regime's Armaments Corporation (Armscor) which specialises in procuring the most advanced and sophisticated military technology, hardware and software, using illegal methods to circumvent the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations. At the present time ARMSCOR employs about 30,000 people and has assets exceeding R1,280 million. It is also involved in the export of arms and calculates that over the next decade arms exports will reach R1.5 billion. ARMSCOR also has its own special missile-testing range covering 40,000 hectares of land and a vehicle testing ground which cost R10 million to build.

From the mid 70's the military took an increasingly important public role in defining the political, economic and ideological strategy of the regime. A series of Defence White Papers as well as seminars and articles inspired by the military-industrial complex have tried to give legitimacy to the greater involvement of the military within the State apparatus and the socio-political life of the country. Today not a single important economic, political, ideological or foreign policy measure is taken without the direct participation of the military. Furthermore, two key pieces of legislation, the National Key Points Act and the National Procurement Act, directly involve industrial and manufacturing enterprises and finance capital in the defence of apartheid. Acting in concert, the military establishment and monopoly capital seek to strengthen the manpower and technological capabilities of the military, whilst at the same time ensuring that the deployment of white manpower within the armed forces does not act as a serious drag on the efficiency and productivity of the economy.

There is a growing interlocking relationship between leading white politicians such as P. W. Botha and Magnus Malan and the military-industrial

complex. The regime articulates more and more the interests of that section of monopoly and finance capital most intimately connected with the military-industrial complex.

The Israeli Connection

At present the greatest threat to the national liberation movement in Africa and the Middle East, peace in the two regions and indeed the world, is posed by the nuclear cooperation between South Africa and Zionist Israel. The nuclear capability of these regimes is a result of the criminal collusion of the main imperialist powers. The UN Special Committee Against Apartheid published in 1978 a report giving details of how and to what extent some countries collaborated with South Africa in the mining of uranium, the manufacture of uranium oxide, uranium enrichment, the construction of uranium plants and research and scientific cooperation, all of which made it possible for South Africa to acquire a nuclear capability. The countries are Belgium, Britain, Canada, West Germany, France, Iran (under the deposed Shah), Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States of America. Let us note that whilst over the past four years the Reagan administration has conducted a trade war against the Soviet Union with energy and at great cost, it has supplied South Africa with computers, weapons of repression and certain types of nuclear materials. It is evident that US imperialism is also encouraging a triple alliance between South Africa, Israel and Taiwan in the production of nuclear weapons which may include certain types of cruise missiles.

Over the past decade the warmongering alliance between Pretoria and Tel-Aviv has deepened and covers the military, economic, political and diplomatic fields. Israel supplies certain technical and scientific research and data, and acts as a conduit for imported military technology from the West, whilst South Africa, with 25% of the world's known reserves of uranium, supplies the essential raw materials. Bearing in mind that the trigger setting off a nuclear war may occur in one of the hot spots of the globe, the Middle East and Southern Africa, the possession by the two genocidal regimes of a nuclear capability poses a grave threat to world peace.

An incorrect and dangerous reaction to this nuclear menace was the positin adopted at the 19th session of the OAU by Kodjo, the former Secretary General of the OAU. Kodjo argued that since South Africa has nuclear weapons it is wrong to seek to declare Africa a nuclear free zone. Instead, he called for the African countries to acquire their own nuclear

bomb. This posture can set off an unnecessary search for nuclear weapons. Instead, the progressive and peace-loving forces should intensify the campaign to extend and deepen the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. All the necessary measures should be taken to compel South Africa and Israel to become signatories to to this treaty and for Africa and the Middle East to be declared nuclear free zones.

To secure support from the imperialist world, the racist regime continually stresses the vital significance of South African mineral resources and South Africa's strategic geo-political location at the junction of the Indian and Atlantic oceans. South Africa leads the world in the production of gold, platinum group metals, manganese, vanadium, chrome, fluorspar, andalusite, sillimanite and vermiculite. It is also one of the leading producers of diamonds, uranium, antimony, asbestos, cobalt, silver and some other minerals. The regime emphasises that the Cape sea route is vital to the West because 60% of western Europe's, 20% of America's and 90% of Japan's oil requirements are transported via this route.

South African military spokesmen stress: "The free world needs us to hold its own against the forces of communism, revolution and terrorism."[1] They argue (a) "that Africa is one of the means of outflanking NATO especially in the maritime sphere via the South Atlantic. In this it should be noted that Soviet Russia has become increasingly powerful at sea . . .

(b) "the RSA must be regarded as a base and support area for the replenishment of Europe during the so-called 'broken-back' phase of nuclear warfare . . . and

(c) "The RSA remains a relatively safe haven for merchant shipping which becomes a vital military asset during the so-called broken-back phase."[2]

Naturally the racist regime exaggerates the significance of its mineral resources and strategic location in order to secure and sustain the support of the imperialist world. In the dominant imperialist countries there are sections of monopoly capital as well as high-ranking military officers and strategists who agree with Pretoria's perception of its importance. They would like to integrate South Africa into the NATO structure and have tried — albeit unsuccessfully — to cobble together a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation (SATO) in which South Africa would be a dominant partner. They also view South Africa as a vital strategic back-up to Diego Garcia, the US-British base in the Indian Ocean. Not surprisinglly these forces fully support South Africa's constant acts of aggression and destabilisation against the frontline states.

Anti-Communism and Anti-Sovietism

The ideological edifice of the racist regime is built on fear and hatred of communism and the Soviet Union. In a White Paper on Defence and Armament Supply, published in 1982, the regime stressed that "Soviet expansionism, with its aim of gaining control of the strategic resources of the west" is the chief threat to the country, and that the west is not doing enough to combat these "Russian objectives." South Africa is not in favour of detente because

> "The Western European process of detente and the fact that communist parties function legally in Western Europe, Britain and the USA means that, although the West may well share South Africa's concern about the Soviet expansionism and military action, it does not share the same perception of the ideological threat."[3]

In the ideological sphere, besides seeing the threat of Marxism-Leninism in global terms, the racists also emphasise that the South African Communist Party seeks to organise and mobilise the working class on the basis of this ideology. Of course, both the SACP and the ANC are seen as surrogates and instruments of Moscow. Any anti-communist organisation in the region and in the world can count on the material and moral support of Pretoria.

South Africa's external military policy is based on the deterrent theory. We can anticipate that aggression against the frontline states will continue and that there will be repeats of action such as the attempted coup in the Seychelles. The military might of the Pretoria terrorists will be used to pursue the economic, political and ideological aims of monopoly capital, both foreign and domestic.

It is not surprising that Pretoria is hostile to the policy of detente and peaceful co-existence. The regime is interested in increasing international tension, since it assumes that a deterioration in the relations between the USA and the USSR will lead to US imperialism stepping up its support for South Africa. For this reason the forces of reaction in South Africa welcome anti-Soviet and anti-communist demagogy as well as the postures of Ronald Reagan.

The SACP and the ANC are firm defenders of the policy of detente and peaceful co-existence. Proceeding from their own experience, as well as that of other countries such as Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua etc., they are aware that, in the period of detente, the way was opened for isolating the most bellicose sections of monopoly capital and imperialism. The possibilities of imposing comprehensive international sanctions against South Africa were also greatly enhanced.

Unlike those who wield power at the moment, the revolutionary forces in South Africa understand that a nuclear war between the great powers would

lead to the total destruction of all the gains and achievements of humanity. This understanding makes it more imperative to emphasise in words and deeds the vital interconnection between the struggle for world peace and possible solutions of the most important problems facing millions of people in the developing countries. The African countries south of the Sahara are experiencing a crisis of catastrophic proportions. Due to the legacy of colonialism as well as to drought and other natural causes, more than 150 million people are threatened with death, while those who survive have only a bleak future before them. The latest UNICEF annual report points out that 29 of the world's poorest nations are south of the Sahara, that they have the lowest incomes in the world and the lowest levels of life expectancy and literacy. In 1984 alone 5 million African children died and another 5 million were crippled by malnutrition and disease.

These facts show that for objective reasons the peace-loving forces of Africa face a task more formidable than in any other region in the world. The communists, revolutionary democrats and all who desire peace in our region must ensure that the peace movement genuinely acquires a universal character. The struggle for world peace and the reduction of the arms race at the global, regional and national levels must form part of our day to day revolutionary activities. The people of Africa must become convinced that the possibility of an improvement in their daily lives is directly related to a reduction in international tension, detente and peaceful coexistence.

Propaganda and agitational work must be conducted in form, content and language that the masses can understand. We need the most diverse and eye-catching forms of expression and slogans to convince the people that they will benefit from the strengthening of the world peace movement.

Waste of Resources

It is obvious that a reduction in the global amounts spent on the nuclear and conventional arms race will release resources which can be utilised to alleviate the burdens of the people in the developing countries. We must expose the attempts of imperialism to compel the African countries to be concerned only with their "own problems" and to use food aid as an ideological and political weapon. Equally it is the duty of all who love peace to make it clear that a nuclear war between the USA and the USSR would lead to a nuclear winter which would spare no people and no country. The myth of a Soviet threat peddled by Pretoria and Washington must also be exposed. Ever since the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 the principal aim of the foreign

policy of the imperialist powers has been to disrupt the alliance between the Soviet Union and world revolutionary forces and to destroy the world's first socialist country. Since the second world war the imperialists have expanded their aim to include all the countries of the socialist community.

We must also expose those who adhere to the "equal responsibility" thesis which seeks to apportion equal blame to both US imperialism and the Soviet Union. We must also counter the arguments of those within the broad peace movement who, whilst agreeing that US imperialism is the main force in fuelling the nuclear and conventional arms race, maintain that the Soviet Union also bears responsibility, albeit at a lower level, and who use the events in Afghanistan to attack the Soviet Union.

The truth is that since 1917 the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government have been in the forefront of the struggle for peace. During the last few years the Soviet Union and the socialist countries have tabled more than 100 proposals to improve the international climate and to remove the threat of a nuclear disaster. The Soviet Union does not seek unilateral advantages and has always been prepared to make concessions to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. If at times the Soviet Union undertakes actions which do not appear to be in its own immediate national interest, this is due to its fundamental and principled commitment to proletarian internationalism. Hundreds of millions of people throughout the world would not want it otherwise. The Soviet Union has always called for negotiations, even in relation to local and regional conflicts. It is not the Soviet Union but the United States which stokes the fires of these conflicts, seeking to transform them into global confrontations. It supplies the most reactionary regimes in the world with all the necessary means to carry out these anti-people activities. It is US imperialism which trampled on the freedom of tiny Grenada by its invasion. It is US imperialism which continues to threaten Cuba and is now engaged in a course of action to overthrow the democratically elected Sandinista government in Nicaragua. It is US imperialism which arms the reactionary forces in Kampuchea and Afghanistan, frustrating all efforts to achieve peace because it would clear the way for social progress. In our fight to preserve our planet we need to be clear as to who threatens the peace of the world, who whips up the arms race, who supplies counter-revolutionaries with arms and money in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and other places, and who, above all, profits from the spiralling and crippling arms race.

In Africa there is a lot of work to be done. It is not good enough to argue, as some do, that our main contribution to peace is to eliminate the racist regime

of South Africa. Revolutionaries in Africa have to show in their daily work the link between development and peace. We need to conduct the peace struggle in South Africa so that our people oppose with ever-growing vigour the aggression against the frontline states, the illegal occupation of Namibia and the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the regime. We must be an integral part of one of the most important movements of the present time — the world peace movement.

Notes

1. M. Hough, "The Strategic Importance of South and Southern Africa," *Strategic Review,* June 1981, p 24.
2. Ibid.
3. M. Hough, "Some Policy and Strategic Aspects," *Strategic Review,* August, 1982. p 4.

UN PEACE YEAR



Logo of the UN International Year of Peace–1986

BOOK REVIEWS

HOW THE LAND WAS STOLEN

Sol Plaatje — Native Life in South Africa, before and since the European War and the Boer Rebellion (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1982. Price £9.95.)

Those who have read Brian Willan's biography of Plaatje (reviewed in *The African Communist* Issue No 100) will agree that Sol Plaatje was both an interesting and complicated figure; gentle but firm. This is discernible in the first pages of this book.

> "This appeal is not on behalf of the naked hordes of cannibals who are represented in fantastic pictures displayed in the shop windows in Europe, most of them imaginary; but it is on behalf of five million loyal British subjects who shoulder 'the black man's burden' every day, doing so without looking forward to any decoration or thanks." (p. 19).

The theme of the book is that the 1913 Land Act is a 'tyrannical enactment' which represented the triumph of 'Boer principles' and 'Dutch inhumanity' over British notions of 'fair play and justice'. Plaatje describes in great detail and in moving words the plight and suffering of the Africans under this Act:

> "This young wandering family decided to dig a grave under cover of the darkness of that night, when no one was looking, and in that crude manner the dead child was interred — and interred amid fear and trembling, as well as the throbs of a torturing anguish, in a stolen grave, lest the proprietor of the spot, or any of the servants, should surprise them in the act. Even criminals dropping straight from the gallows have an undisputed claim to six feet of ground on which to rest their criminal remains but, under the cruel operation of the Natives Land Act, little children, whose only crime is that God did not make them white, are sometimes denied that right in their ancestral home.
>
> "Numerous details narrated by those victims of an Act of Parliament kept us awake all that night, and by next morning we were glad enough to hear no more of the sickening procedure of extermination voluntarily instituted by the South African Parliament." (p. 90).

Plaatje travelled through the Orange Free State, Transvaal and the Cape, making personal observations, private enquiries and collecting information, stories and data. This first-hand knowledge of the situation explains the 'freshness' of the material and the authoritative style in which he writes. Plaatje is openly partisan in this approach, siding with the Africans:

> ". . . nearly all the white lawyers in South Africa to whom we spoke about this measure, had either not seen the Act at all, or had not read it carefully, so that in both cases they could not tell exactly for whose benefit it had been passed. The study of this law required a much longer time than the lawyers, unless specially briefed, could devote to it, so that they hardly knew what all the trouble was about. It was the native in the four provinces who knew all about it, for he had not read it in books but had himself been through its mill, which like an automatic machine ground him relentlessly since the end of the month of June." (p. 23).

In this book Plaatje discusses exactly that which has been described as the bitter irony of the First World War, namely that the colonial people fought for their further enslavement. The South African regime of the day refused the Africans entry into the war, partly because they were afraid to train and arm the blacks and partly because of anti-British sentiments. The Africans on the other hand wanted to show their loyalty to Britain, partly as a response to Boer sentiments. This loyalty was also necessitated by the fact that the Africans, unarmed and disarmed, were at the mercy of the powers that be. This position, contradictory as it was, reflected the contradictions which were present in South African society at the time; it expressed the hope and despair of the African — the contradiction between defiance and dependency. This explains why from 1914 to 1916 the ANC refrained from criticising the government as a demonstration of its 'loyalty to King and Empire' in the war against Germany.

The weaknesses in the book reflect the level of political knowledge and understanding at the time. Our leaders and thinkers of the time were very much involved in burning local issues and did not often delve into such political issues as the character of imperialism and its international ramifications.

But the significance of the book lies in the fact that through a thorough examination and critique of the 1913 Land Act, a critique that was based on first-hand information and observation, Plaatje demonstrated that the leaders of the ANC were not "making general allegations of the hardships without producing any specific cases that can bear examination." (p. 17). The book deals also with political trends and tendencies at the turn of the century and therefore belongs to our pioneer works in African historiography. Plaatje intended the book to be an appeal to the British

government and public. "Shall we appeal to you in vain? I hope not." (p. 104). It therefore forms the early beginnings of the ANC's international campaign against that system now called apartheid — a call for international condemnation of racism and colonialism.

In his introduction to the book Brian Willan gives us interesting insights into Plaatje's busy schedule and how he went about doing his work; and Bessie Head, in her forward, says:

> "*Native Life* does not fail as a book of flaming power and energy, astonishingly crowded with data of the day-to-day life of a busy man who assumed great sorrows and great responsibilities, who felt himself fully representative of a silent, oppressed people and by sheer grandeur of personality, honoured that obligation. Most black South Africans suffer from a broken sense of history. *Native Life* provides an essential, missing link. This book may have failed to appeal to human justice in its time, but there is in its tears, anguish and humility, an appeal to a day of retribution." (p xiii).

The 1913 Land Act has not yet disappeared — on the contrary, there are now more mass removals than during Plaatje's time (perhaps this is why Ravan Press reprinted the book) and the ANC, in confronting the enemy on all fronts, is continuing from where Plaatje left off. The contents of this book are still as relevant as 70 years ago when it was written.

Nyawuza

AN INSTRUMENT OF MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa by Duncan Innes (Heinemann Educational Books 1984. Price £8.50)

Although it is a commonplace that the Anglo American group of companies wields unprecedented economic power in South Africa, very little has been written, as Innes puts it, either on "the conditions and extent of that power, what form it takes, how it works and what are its limitations" (p. 14) or on how the growth and activities of the companies are linked "to the wider processes of social change and development in the society as a whole" (p. 16).

In this book Innes sets out to fill these gaps in our knowledge of contemporary South African history. His approach to this task is to set the history of Anglo American in the context of the specific political and economic conditions of the different stages of capitalist development in South Africa as these were, in turn, conditioned by changes in the world capitalist economy. Utilising this approach, Innes proceeds to produce a

detailed analysis of the emergence and growth of the Anglo American group and of its effects upon South African economy and society. It is not possible here to summarise, even briefly, the complex changes which Innes describes in considerable and fascinating detail. Suffice it to say that he convincingly analyses the economic processes (for example, transformations in market conditions and in the means of production) and the political conditions (for example, working class and national struggles) which resulted in the restructuring of the economy in a way which made possible the continuous expansion of the Anglo American group.

In essence, Innes argues that the development of monopoly capitalism in South Africa was both the condition and consequence of the emergence of the Anglo American conglomerate. He demonstrates how, through a process of *concentration,* Anglo American "concentrated new areas of production under its control" (p. 220) and how through a process of *centralization* it secured control of existing areas of production and finance. In these ways, the Group not only accumulated massive interests in gold and diamond mining, but expanded into manufacturing, finance, property and agriculture.

Innes's analysis of the emergence of monopoly capitalism in South Africa and of the growth of the giant South African-based Anglo American multinational corporation leads him to pose a more general question about the nature of imperialism. Given South African investment in the USA and in other advanced capitalist countries and given South Africa's relations with Nambia and other countries of the region, Innes concludes that "the transition to monopoly capitalism in South Africa also produced the phenomenon of South African imperialism." (p. 239) If this is correct, it follows that the simple assumption, in some theories of imperialism, that dominated economies can never themselves become imperialist, must be re-examined.

Be that as it may, and despite some questionable theoretical and political formulations in the book, Innes has broken new and important ground by providing a rich analysis of the specific development of the South African economy and, in particular, of one overwhelmingly important capitalist group within it. The analysis of the South African economy and its reciprocal relationship with political relations and struggles has been badly neglected by the South African left. This book will provide a basis, through both critique and elaboration of it, for the strengthening of our understanding of the specific and not merely general relevance of the 'politics of production' for the struggle for national liberation.

R.A.H.

PRODUCTION RELATIONS UNDER APARTHEID

From Stofilis, Lusaka

Dear Editor,

This is a response to an article which appeared in your AC No 100, First Quarter, 1985. The article is written by Denga and the title is "Botha's Reforms have not changed 'Colonialism of a Special Type'". Perhaps it is not a response but a friendly correction of some flaws in the article.

The article has got several loopholes. What is mainly worrying with the loopholes (otherwise it would have passed as a good article) is that there are shortcomings almost at the centre of the whole argument and hence they threaten to contradict the whole article.

One of the basic problems of our time that the article is trying to combat is the whole concept of 'racial capitalism'. But in trying to combat this deviation, it almost verbatim repeats arguments of the advocates of the 'racial capitalism' concept. Let us quote Denga at the most crucial stage of his arguments:

> "The system of racial domination determines the totality of production relations. Ownership of the means of production is determined by the racial litmus paper; relations at the workplace are determined on the basis of colour, for example in the matter of training, skills, the choice of foremen, etc." Page 68.

The advocates of the 'racial capitalism' concept would be happy to read this statement. Advocates of this position say that in South Africa "race is a class determinant." In other words it is the colour of the skin that makes a divide in the relations of production; if you are born white you'll be an exploiter but if you are born black you are condemned to be the exploited. What this means is that (or it may easily mean) if you are born white you'll own means of production and if you are born black you'll only sell your labour power in order to survive.

The statement that "ownership of the means of production is determined by the racial litmus paper" is not absolutely true. Very soon we are going to witness the black petty bourgeoisie acquiring shares in investments in the Bantustans. Gatsha Buthelezi, Motswenyana, etc are actually advocates of that likely eventuality. What about blacks who own large stretches of capitalist surgarcane farms in Natal and KwaZulu? Once this situation develops will Denga then say we need to review the nature of production relations in South Africa?

Denga's quotation also suggests that white workers are not exploited. In fact in the whole article he does not discuss the fact that the exploitation of the white worker is an essential part of the argument. The position of the white workers, in as far as to whether they own or do not own the means of production, has not been (automatically) determined by the "racial litmus paper." They still do not own the means of production.

Another difference which Denga does not make strictly enough is that one between 'production relations' and 'relations at the workplace'. Production relations is something broader and more fundamental. The essence of it is who owns the means of production and who does not in the process of production. The other secondary and tertiary relations like distribution and consumption flow from that. But relations at the workplace are not fundamental if they mean what Denga has quoted as examples. That the foreman is white, he is better skilled is not a fundamental thing. It is not the essence of the contradiction and hence should not be stated as if it is equivalent to production relations in their totality.

In page 70 he continues:

> ".... the nature of exploitation manifests itself first and foremost in the context of the place he occupies in the racial equation,..."

This is not the 'nature' of exploitation that he talks about but the 'extent' of exploitation. The nature of economic exploitation of the white worker who is doing some complicated work in assembling the engine in an automobile plant and a black worker who simply fastens nuts (perhaps because he is also not skilled) is the same. It is exploitation as set out by Marx in his Theory of Surplus Value. But there is a far greater extent of exploitation of the black worker in the sense that his wage is not even equal that of the white worker (even if they are equally skilled) but also because he is black and his standard of living has been set at a lower level. The capitalist boss must reap super profits at the same time the white worker must be given more wages in order that he believes he is boss over the black worker and thus defends the status quo.

ON BRITISH AND U.S. CHICANERY IN GUYANA

From Janet Jagan, executive secretary, PPP

Dear Editor,

Warmest greetings from the People's Progressive Party and our publications *Thunder* and *Mirror*. We deeply appreciate your publication and our comrades keenly read the contents. We wanted to draw your attention to the article in the first quarter 1985 under Editorial Notes headed Capitalism and Freedom Don't Go Together. We are reproducing it in our newspaper the *Mirror*, which we do from *The African Communist* from time to time.

However, we wanted to point out that two important dates are left out on page 18. In October 1953, the British government suspended the constitution in the then British Guiana and ousted the elected government of the People's Progressive Party. There is no doubt that US policy, particularly virulent at that time in Latin America, greatly influenced the UK government's decision to remove our Party from office. It is also relevant that this was the prelude to the coup in Guatemala the next year.

In 1964, the CIA, working through trade union links between US and Guyanese trade unions and working with opposition political parties sought to destabilize the 3rd elected government of the People's Progressive Party and succeeded, along with the machinations of the British, to oust the PPP from office and instal another party in government. The USA was particularly enraged over our government's friendship with Cuba and other socialist countries. This, too, seemed to be the prelude to the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic.

AN AUTHOR REPLIES

From Brian Willan, London

Dear Editor,

I was very interested to read the review of my book *Sol Plaatje: South African Nationalist* in Issue No 100 of *The African Communist*, and pleased that it was generally so favourable.

I would be grateful, however, if you could pass on a request to your reviewer to have another look at the context of the passage quoted at the top of p 109. My intention was to cast this whole paragraph as reflecting the viewpoint of the directors of De Beers, and not myself as author. I don't therefore feel that I can be accused of 'endorsing' the views expressed therein, and it would certainly not be my wish to be associated personally with them.

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